

THE CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE.

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ON THE DUTY, PRIVILEGE, AND RESPONSIBILITY OF CHURCHES IN THE CHOICE OF THEIR PASTORS,*

BEING

*The Seventh Address of the Annual Assembly of the Congregational Union of
England and Wales, held at the Congregational Library, London, May 12th,
1840, to the Ministers and Churches of the same Faith and Order throughout
the Empire.*

BRELOVED BRETHREN, by the appointment of the last Assembly we address you on a topic which cannot be otherwise regarded than as highly seasonable, viz. "the duty, privilege, and responsibility of our churches in the choice of their pastors, and the spirit in which this most important transaction should be conducted." May He who teaches to profit, guide us to statements and suggestions adapted to promote your edification and his glory.

So comprehensive is the subject to which we are affectionately to invite your attention, that we must waive all preliminary observations, and enter at once on the consideration of its separate parts. We have determined, in affectionately addressing to you the word of faithful exhortation on a subject so vital to your prosperity, to direct your thoughts—to the duty of seeking to obtain personal edification and comfort by securing for yourselves pastoral instruction and oversight—to the privilege which, in exercising the power of electing your pastors, you enjoy—to the solemn responsibilities which are inseparable from this privilege—and, finally, to the wisdom and prudence, and pre-eminently, the meekness and gentleness of Christ, which its exercise demands. Upon some of these points,

* This valuable letter would have appeared at an earlier period but for circumstances not under the controul of the Editor.

which might seem to require to be sustained by argument, we should not even touch, did not, as we conceive, the position in which an increasing number of our churches is placed, appear to require it. Our great object is practical, and upon practical points we shall chiefly dwell.

I. Suffer us then, beloved brethren, first to remind you of *your obligation to secure for yourselves pastoral instruction and oversight*. We would call you to remember that the office of pastor is of *divine* appointment, for when the Saviour ascended up on high he gave *some* pastors and teachers; and that the office is of *permanent authority* is evident from the fact that Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every church, and that reference is made in the epistles to the bishops or pastors and deacons ministering in the churches to which these epistles were sent. Further, we wish you to notice that *the work to which bishops or pastors were especially appointed is clearly described*. They are to "preach the word;" "to feed the flock of God;" to "take care of the house of God;" to train up holy men for the work of the ministry, &c. Such, brethren, is the work, and such the agency which the Lord of the church appointed to accomplish it. Are we, brethren, at liberty to substitute different agency? Does it become us to think that we can improve upon the institutions of Infinite Wisdom? Shall we not best promote God's ends, by God's means? We should conjure you, beloved brethren, not to renounce or undervalue an office which the Lord of all has instituted, even though we could see no reason for the institution. But there is an obvious reason. It is most manifest that christian teachers cannot in general secure time so to search the Scriptures as to bring out of their treasures things new and old, without entire separation to the work. We are not called upon to deny that in some churches gifted brethren may exist, men of mind and of leisure, who are able to speak to edification and comfort; but all experience forbids us to hope that this can be a general case. So that if your edification be not provided for by the election of pastors, it will be vain to expect the means of much progress in knowledge and holiness: and when gifted brethren do exist in a church, there is nothing in our system to deprive its members of any benefit which it is possible to derive from them. Under some such regulations as those which are suggested in "Jethro," one of our prize essays on Lay Agency, all the gifts of the body might find a profitable field for their exercise. We would exclude you, brethren, from no means of spiritual improvement which the Head of the church may have really put within your reach. But we are somewhat anxious to press the sentiment upon you, that pastoral teaching and oversight are in all cases the *best* and most *certain*, and in various cases, the *only* mode of providing for the edification of the body.

II. We proceed to remind you, beloved brethren, that in the power you possess and exercise of choosing your pastors you enjoy a most important *privilege*. Were it our present object to establish your right to elect your own pastors, it would be easy to prove that it is essential to you, as voluntary societies, on whom, of course, no member, far less a pastor, can be intruded—that without it, you

could not guard the purity of your own religious principles, nor secure from error those who should receive from you the pure light of the gospel—that its possession is required in order to obedience to those commands which enforce esteem and love to your pastors, and entire departure from those who bring another gospel—that apostolic churches, as shown in the early history of Christianity, possessed and exercised this right. On these points we must not dwell, but we cannot forbear to remind you of the high advantage which this privilege confers upon you. And first, it is manifest that your own spiritual profit is most effectually secured by exercising the right of electing your own pastors. There must obviously be an adaptation in the public ministrations of the pastor to the minds and attainments, to the degree of knowledge and of faith, and to the general circumstances of the body over which he is placed, or his labours cannot but be comparatively useless. And who, brethren, can judge whether there exists this adaptation but yourselves? Who but you can decide whether he speaks to edification, whether your knowledge, faith, and spiritual affections are expanded and invigorated under his ministry? Surely none. Great then is the privilege of influence in the election of the men, who by God's blessing are to train you up for glory, honour, and immortality. Secondly, it is not less manifest that the spiritual benefit of others is best secured in this way. The salvation of those who are as yet *without* the church, depends mainly upon the preservation of an evangelical ministry *within* it. The great practical question then is, what is the most effectual mode of securing and perpetuating such a ministry? We answer, *the divinely appointed one* of committing the power of electing to the pastoral office to those who themselves understand, believe, and love evangelical truth. This is, brethren, the true, and the only effectual, preservative principle. Other denominations have erected human barriers against error in the pulpit; they have framed their articles, and their confessions of faith; but how large a part of their clergy are anti-evangelical! We have followed the revealed mode; we have admitted to our fellowship those only who give credible evidence of their conversion to God; we have restricted the right of choosing the pastor to them; and with the blessing of God, the happy result is, that from one end of the country to the other, our pastors speak substantially the same thing.

We feel, beloved brethren, growing confidence that the door into the pastoral oversight of the flock, can only be safely opened by the members of that flock. Political and worldly motives may be expected to influence others, but love to the truth, and the Saviour, and the souls of men will influence you. You know and love the voice of the true Shepherd. You will not open the door to a stranger, for his voice you know not. Yet we must remind you, brethren, that to secure the full benefit of your principles, it will be necessary to exercise strict vigilance in preserving the purity of your communion. Should ungodly men creep in amongst you, or be permitted to remain, after all doubt in reference to their character has been removed, and thus obtain influence in the election of the pastor, one of the great conservative barriers against error will be,

at least, partially destroyed. Guard then, brethren, most vigilantly the door of admission to your fellowship. Receive none but those of whom you have evidence that the Lord has received them, and let there be a constant and careful inspection of the flock within the sacred inclosure. "Watch over one another in love." "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." Bear not "them that are evil." "Purge out the old leaven," and "keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

We must add also, brethren, preserve the power of election in your own hands. To extend it to others generally, would break down another of the conservative barriers against error. The choice of pastors cannot be safely confided to irreligious men, though they should form part of your congregations. Should there be *religious* men in a congregation they ought to be in the church; and they have no right to complain of being made to suffer the consequences of the unscriptural position in which, with great peril, they permit themselves to remain. Besides, the election of which we speak is to the pastoral office. The relation into which it brings a minister is a special relation to the church, none but members of the church can consequently have the power to elect. At the same time we admit that it will be expedient to consult the opinions of the more pious members of the congregation. Yet when this is done, let especial care be taken not to convey the notion that, as a church, you can for a moment sanction the anomalous position in which they stand.

III. We pass on to remind you, beloved brethren, of the very solemn *responsibilities* which are inseparable from this privilege. Never forget, we conjure you, that to God you must answer, for the choice you make of the pastor who is to instruct, to direct, and govern you;—for all the measures you take with a view to his election; for the principles and spirit which guided those measures;—for the preservation of peace and love during a crisis always trying, sometimes fatal;—for your cordial reception of your newly elected pastor;—for the vigour with which you hold up his hands, and your cheerful adoption of those measures which are best adapted to promote the comfort and usefulness of the pastor, the prosperity of the church, and the extension of the Saviour's kingdom. For all this, you, brethren, are personally responsible to God. Every individual must answer for the whole of his conduct in relation to the election of the pastor, and should that election fall upon one who is not blameless, not sound in the faith, not apt to teach, fearful indeed must be the account of every party to such election, who acted with criminal negligence, or civil motives, in the day when God will render to every man according to his deeds.

The amount and solemnity of this responsibility is of course proportioned to the magnitude of the results which depend upon a wise exercise of this privilege of election. Observe then,

First, beloved brethren, that the choice of the pastor must exert a most important influence upon the spiritual condition of the church to which you belong;—on the sentiments of its members;—on their piety, their devotion, their zeal, their activity, and their efficient

labours;—and, by necessary consequence, upon the enlargement, and even continued existence of the church itself. There is an old adage, equally true and important, “like priest like people.” A reciprocal influence, indeed, exists here,—the people form the pastor and the pastor forms the people. Brethren, let the recollection of this important fact augment your desire to keep the church pure and the pulpit pure; for as, on the one hand, error cannot well find its way into the pulpit while the electors’ seats are filled with holy men; so, on the other, radical error is not likely to find its way to those seats when there are found in the pulpit sound doctrine and ardent piety, and a heart panting with zeal for the promotion of God’s glory and the world’s salvation.

Great responsibility then rests upon you, brethren, in the choice of pastors, on account of the commanding influence of the pulpit over the sentiments, and feelings, and conduct of those to whom the addresses of the pulpit are habitually directed; influence for good or evil, for salvation or damnation. When your election falls on a man of God, sound in the faith, of practical wisdom, of ardent zeal, of great affection and holy love, a man of faith and prayer, a prudent, laborious, and persevering man, a man of gentleness and meekness, and altogether like his Lord,—then, unless there be some radical defect or neglect among yourselves, will be found great prosperity. The church will be like a watered garden which the Lord God hath planted. The north wind will awake, and the south wind come and blow upon the garden, and the spices thereof shall flow out, and the Beloved will come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruit. With your churches thus happily situated, the knowledge of your members will rapidly advance, your faith will grow exceedingly, your love to one another and to all the Israel of God will abound, your comfort and joy in the Holy Ghost will be steadfast, your labours in the cause of Christ will be active, incessant, successful. In fine, the church will be the holy city, the new Jerusalem come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. But let your election fall on one who is not sound in the faith, a man who possesses no personal religion or very defective piety, and the scene will be reversed. The mere lack of life-giving and life-sustaining truth in the pulpit, without positive error, operates upon a church like a drought upon the herbage in summer. No plants of righteousness will long be found in such a field, for the Lord of the vineyard will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it. No living members can be retained in such a body, no living members introduced. Should it preserve its existence, which is not always the case, it becomes useless to the church and to the world, to God and man. Within it can be found no proofs of the divine origin and power of Christianity,—no leaven to leaven the unholy lump around,—no sacrifices for the sake of Christ,—no holy love, nor zeal, nor enterprize. Like a barren rock, such a church will stand in the midst, it may be, of surrounding fertility—like a ship in the midst of a tempest while the mariners are all asleep;—like a blind man leading a number of others equally blind, groping and stumbling, until at length all together fall into the ditch.

Secondly, the choice of the pastor must exert important influence beyond the boundaries of the church, and hence your responsibility, beloved brethren, in relation to this point must be great.

On the congregation assembling with you this influence will be considerable. An evangelical, practical, earnest, faithful, affectionate and pungent ministry will be like life from the dead. We question much whether such a ministry was ever long perpetuated in any place without spiritual fruit, and considerable fruit, in awakened enquiry on the part of the ignorant and careless, in repentance and conversion to God, in the augmentation of the numbers and spiritual resources of the church, and its power to operate with effect upon the masses of spiritual death by which it is surrounded. And consequently the choice of the pastor must exert considerable influence in the vicinity of the church, for an able and devoted pastor will not permit his people to fold up their arms in sleep while multitudes around are perishing for lack of knowledge. He will lift up his voice like a trumpet, and if he cannot arouse, he will leave them to the more powerfully awakening tones of another. It will have also an indirect influence upon other churches and upon other ministers, rousing and stimulating them when the choice of the pastor is widely made, and thus improving the tone of the ministry in general. It will give life and energy to the various benevolent and religious societies which are under the immediate direction of the church, or within its vicinity, and thus augment that sacred stream of holy beneficence which we trust will ere long overflow and bless the whole world.

Thirdly, the choice of a pastor has an important influence on the promotion of the Saviour's glory. It must suffice us to say on this point, that the honour of the chief Shepherd is deeply interested in the personal character, and eminent holiness, of the pastor you choose; in his correct exhibition of the doctrines, in his faithful exhibition of the laws, and his correct and impartial and vigorous administration of the discipline of the Saviour's kingdom. The weight of responsibility resting upon you, brethren, in the election of your pastors, must then be great—fearfully great. May the Lord grant wisdom and grace and purity of aim, that we may at length render our account with joy, and find acceptance with Him.

IV. We would now respectfully lay before you a few miscellaneous suggestions in reference to the manner and spirit in which this most important transaction should be conducted.

Our first remark relates to the qualifications which should be pre-eminently desired in those whom you invite to take the oversight of you in the Lord. Our long-cherished thoughts on this point may be expressed in a word, "Look for *goodness* rather than *greatness*;"—for high spiritual endowments rather than splendid and profound erudition. You cannot suppose that we undervalue mind and the stores of mind, or that we think a competent measure of either can be dispensed with in the present day; but we are sure that eminent piety contributes more powerfully to the promotion of the great ends of the christian ministry than eminent ability. Still, we are disposed to say, beloved brethren, secure as much mind as possible, but be

very sure that the man whom you place in the pastoral office is an eminently holy man; a man mighty in the Scriptures, devout, patient, gentle, meek, forbearing, and courteous; a man of great affection, for it is love, not intellect, that conquers the human heart: a prudent man, possessed of profound knowledge of human nature, and considerable skill in guiding the opinions and decisions of others, for how else shall he rule well the church of God? These are the talents, (if we may thus use the term) which you should supremely desire in your pastors. Should you, on the other hand, permit yourselves to be captivated by glitter, by volubility, and sprightliness of fancy, or even by vigour of intellect in the pulpit, while the tone of spiritual feeling is relaxed and feeble, there may be mental excitement, but there will be no conversions to God.

Secondly, when the pulpit becomes vacant, we conjure you to take no step to supply the vacancy without earnest, solemn, and united prayer to Him who has promised to give pastors according to his heart, that shall feed the flock with knowledge and understanding. It may be doubted whether in any case the pastoral relation has proved a blessing to both parties, when in forming that relation, the divine direction was not anxiously implored. Certain, however, it is, that you have no right to expect that a pastor will bring with him a blessing, who does not come in answer to prayer.

And further, beloved brethren, we would enforce the duty of prayer on account of its collateral as well as its direct benefit. Prayer is adapted to produce a deeper sense of the responsibility which rests upon you in the election of your pastor; it places vividly before you the qualifications needed in the pastor; it is likely to secure unanimity, and when it does not entirely effect this, it cannot fail to prevent a rupture of confidence and affection. When a church, in a spirit of dependance and faith, and holy importunity, has sought direction of the chief Shepherd, its members have seldom had to bewail the results of election to the pastoral office. Unhappy elections are prayerless ones.

Thirdly, we earnestly recommend, brethren, that the pastoral relation be not too *hastily* formed. Let sufficient time be given for securing that degree of mutual knowledge which may supply a solid basis for permanent confidence and affection. It is impossible, indeed, to regulate by any fixed rule, the direction of the probationary period (as it is usually called); yet we incline to think that it should generally be a little more protracted than is sometimes the case. When indeed your eyes are directed to a man of established character, of tried prudence, and practical wisdom, (he having the requisite knowledge of you) the union may at once be formed. But when the minister in view is a young, and consequently an untried man, or when the parties have had few means of mutual acquaintance, it cannot surely be thought that the brief and imperfect intercourse of a week or two will justify the formation of a connexion which is to both parties pregnant with most momentous consequences. We have departed, brethren, in this point, from the practice of our ancestors, and as might have been expected, we have

suffered for it. It is *a priori* probable that unions hastily formed will be long repented of.

Fourthly, we would recommend, brethren, that no accessible minister (we say, *accessible*, because we do not approve the practice of church robbery which has of late become too common,) be introduced to the vacant pulpit with a view to the pastoral office, unless, on ample enquiry, he should be thought to possess all the qualifications which are requisite to that office in that particular church. We feel assured, that much mischief has resulted from the lack of suitable caution on this point. Individuals totally disqualified by character, by temper, by deficient attainments for a particular station, have been introduced to it, and the result has been division and every evil work. And it may not be out of place here to caution our pastors against hasty recommendations. Brethren, great and solemn responsibility is involved in recommending a minister to a destitute church. No personal considerations, no private friendship should influence us, if we doubt his adaptation to the station. A brother, by the ties of blood, should be refused, if we cannot consider him adapted to promote there the cause of God. In taking the necessary steps to bring among you a man who may prove a pastor after God's own heart, it may not be possible, perhaps, for the church to act as a body. It will, in that case, be necessary to devolve this work upon the deacons or a few individuals *chosen by the church for this specific purpose*, for we do not think it belongs of right to the deacon's office. Yet we would not advise that this Committee should be entrusted with the power of introducing a minister with a view to his subsequent election without the previous consent of the church. We would have no *imperium in imperio*. We would rather leave the decision of this point, as well as the election of the pastor, to the general body of the communicants, than give it to a smaller body, though elected by the church itself.

Fifthly, we would earnestly caution you, when more individuals than one are recommended as likely to repair the breach made by death or removal, to avoid the mistake of determining to hear, and make trial of all, before a final decision is attempted. Certain churches, as if by miracle, may have escaped the formation of parties, when the practice just referred to has been followed, but it is difficult to conceive a more effectual mode of forming them. Those differences of attainment, or taste, or habits of thought which must exist in almost every church, cannot well fail, in such circumstances, to produce a difference of judgment with respect to the individual best adapted to fill the pastoral office, and in the train of divided opinion, a rupture of confidence and affection is but too likely to follow. Experience has thoroughly convinced us, brethren, that it is best to introduce first to the scene of labour the individual who is considered, after much deliberation and prayer, most likely to promote among you and in its vicinity, the kingdom of our Lord, and to decide the question concerning his election before other measures are resorted to, or other candidates are even thought of. In most cases, this careful mode of proceeding would succeed in securing an early and

unanimous decision, and thus ward off one of the greatest evils which can befall a church, the evil of remaining long as "sheep without a shepherd."

Sixthly, we would strongly deprecate, beloved brethren, those private efforts which have been sometimes made, when more than one accessible minister is in view, to influence the opinions of the body with a view to carry the election of a particular individual. Such efforts are usually put forth under the pretence of securing the best interests of the church, but they may be prompted by private friendship, by ignorant partiality, or by pride. Were it right for one member to employ such means to gratify his own wishes and tastes, it must be right for all; now what fruit could result from a general effort of this kind but irritation, and estrangement, and discord, and division, and every evil work?

Seventhly. We would exhort you, beloved brethren, in exercising individually your undoubted privilege to vote in the election of a pastor, to remember that each of your brethren and sisters (for in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female,) possesses the same privilege with you. That all have a right to make their wishes known, and, as far as possible, to have them practically attended to in reference to this important business. We do believe, brethren, that the recollection of this fact would render it impossible for any individuals among you to resolve to accomplish their own wishes, even though they should be at variance with the convictions of others. Each would say to himself, neither my talents nor my property give me any right to impose a pastor upon a Congregational Church. I have assisted in wresting that power from the hands of the Pope and the State, it would ill become me to monopolize or attempt to monopolize it myself. Having speculatively admitted that the right of election to the pastoral office is in the body of communicants, I must not practically deny it by acting as if it belonged to me. I will advise, but should I fail to convince my brethren, and should their voice, adverse to mine in the election, prevail, they will have done me no wrong. They will have acted on a principle acknowledged by myself as well as by them—that the members of a christian church have a right to elect their own pastors.

Eighthly, we would exhort you individually, beloved brethren, to bear in mind that in the choice of a pastor, no member of a church must regard his own interest merely, but aim to promote the welfare of the body, and the glory of its Head and Lord. Every individual among you should thus identify himself, his welfare and prosperity, with those of the church. Cases will occur in which certain members of a church may feel a decided preference for one of two ministers brought upon the field, while the majority may with equal decision desire the other. What is he to do, then? Must the minority yield, and thus sacrifice what may appear to them superior means of spiritual edification and enjoyment? We should be disposed to reply, that if, upon the whole, they should think the minister desired by the majority best adapted to promote *the spiritual prosperity* of that majority, the case involves no difficulty. The small minority should nobly resolve to prefer the good of the whole to

that of a part, though they are comprehended in it. They should determine to sacrifice the gratification of taste, or intellect, and if it must be so, some portion of personal improvement to promote the welfare of the body. We do not think, however, that they would suffer in a spiritual point of view by this disinterested conduct. The Lord will not permit any to sustain loss by the annihilation of self. Submission is seldom dangerous; self-will is invariably so.

But again, suppose the dissentients should imagine that the majority have made or are about to make a wrong choice—a choice not adapted to promote their own comfort and edification, what are they to do then? Will not the general principles just laid down prove a sufficient guide here also? What, if the minority were to say to themselves, *We think our brethren have not been guided by the spirit of wisdom in this election. They think otherwise. Is it certain that we are right and they are wrong? Who can decide this important question? If we cannot so far relinquish our opinion as to say, "Perhaps they may be right," would it not be better to act as if we thought so, and leave it to future events, to settle the difference between us?* Brethren, whether we are right or not, in reference to this specific suggestion, certain we are that this spirit of yielding and submission is the spirit that ought pre-eminently to be enforced upon the churches of the saints. Did it exist in the required degree, it would prevent most of the evils which occasionally spring up amongst us; especially those which are apt to appear when a church is called upon to elect a pastor. It is the determination of each to carry his own point, to provide for his own gratification or edification, regardless of the interests of others, that is the root of all the evil. We never heard of serious mischief resulting from the submission of the minority to the majority, or of the majority to the minority, (which may at times be proper, if the latter be considerable,) when the submission has been a real concession to the judgments, the wishes, and the wants of those whose salvation should be as dear to our hearts as it was to that of the Redeemer. We do not believe that such submission can ever lead to mischief. It is regarded with high approbation by the Saviour, and it will not lose its reward.

In fine, brethren, the election of pastors is perhaps the greatest act of power, privilege, and responsibility committed by the Saviour to his churches. The due performance of it must therefore require the largest supplies of grace, and the highest exercise of a truly christian spirit. Among our churches many elections to the pastoral office are so conducted. They accordingly prove, at the time, seasons of great interest, edification, and grateful joy; and are followed, as might be anticipated, with most happy results, in the lasting prosperity of the church, and in the enlarged usefulness of the pastor. Some elections among us, are unhappily of a different character. An evil spirit prevails in them. Foolish counsels are followed. They are scenes of discord. They are pregnant with dishonour and mischief to the cause of Christ. On such a subject, therefore, beloved brethren, plain and faithful admonitions can require no apology. Your anxiety must be great as our own, that every election to the pastoral office in your churches, should be conducted in a spirit calm, devout, wise,

simple, patient, godly, your practice recommending your principles—your spirit accordant with your professions—and you yourselves receiving of the Lord an ample recompense into your own bosoms, of peace and joy, enlargement and prosperity.

Accept, dear brethren, this address as a renewed proof of our love, and an additional instance of our sincere concern to promote the best interests of the independent churches in our own land, and throughout the whole world.

Signed by direction of the Assembly, on its behalf,

JAMES BENNETT, D. D. Chairman.

THE HERMIT OF MOUNT SINAI.

MR. ISAAC TAYLOR, in the fifth part of his *Ancient Christianity*, which has just appeared, speaking of the men who, in the Nicene age, were remarkable exceptions to that corruption of mind and manners which generally prevailed, has the following paragraph:—

“A dozen less noted names might be mentioned, whose writings, (they were all recluses) not less than those of much better times, would suggest a supposition directly contradicted by history. Such are Hilary of Arles, Prosper of Aquitaine, and Eucherius, a companion of Vincent, in the monastery of Lerins: or turning eastward, we find, at the same time, Isidore of Pelusium, inferior to few in calm judgment and apparent fervour; or Nilus, the admirable anchorite of Sinai, whose epistles might be perused with advantage by modern Christians.”* Again, in a note, he observes—“the epistles of Nilus, edifying, although darkened by the Nicene cloud, I have before me, and also his invaluable personal narrative, (invaluable as a document of history.) His *Ascetica*, containing (this I assume at second hand) the more explicit part of his inculcation of the monks of his time, I have failed, as yet, to obtain. Nilus, describing the life in the wilderness among the solitudes of Sinai, in a manner which might tempt one to follow him, attests the general corruption of the times, as affirmed by Salvian; and this testimony relates to a rather earlier period. There was no mean, no general morality, no diffused virtue—nothing but extremes—either a grim asceticism, driven into the wilderness, or utter dissoluteness everywhere else. A long and particular description of the luxury of the age, commences, *Τοσουτον γαρ ισχυσεν ΝΥΝ ἡ ἀπληστος λαίμαργια* . . . Narrationes, p. 31.”†

The *Ascetica* of Nilus is in the fifth volume of the *Bibliotheca Patrum*, and fully justifies the account of the monks of the Nicene age which Mr. Taylor gives from Salvian. He draws a flattering picture of the character and conduct of the Christians who lived in the time of the apostles, or immediately afterwards. He speaks of their being neither rich nor poor, but a prevailing equality; of there being neither judgments nor accusations, because each had in his own

* No. 5, p. 77.

† No. 5, p. 50.

conscience an uncorrupted judge, whose testimony was sought and followed; and of envy, hatred, and vain-glory being so far banished, that even in dreams they were unacquainted with them. The contrast between the primitive and the Nicene period, as to its moral aspect, is strongly asserted and vividly declared by Nilus. Those who, in his day, had professed to desert the world, he describes as wearing the monastic habit because of the licence which it afforded. "We are despised," says he, "as a troublesome and covetous rabble, by those who ought to reverence us; we are the sport of the marketplace, as really differing from the world but in dress, wearing merely an exterior of honesty." Of the monks in general, he writes—"Those who ought to be havens and temples of God and his sheep, become rocks, and whited sepulchres, and ravening wolves. They besiege the doors of the rich; cities are oppressed with the numbers of these vagrants; of those received hospitably, a short time has revealed the feigned piety, and their infamous lives have been discovered; so that now all who appear modest and holy are imagined to be corrupters, and worse infected than as if with leprosy, and there is less trust reposed in monks than in assassins and highwaymen!" Had Mr. Taylor met with the *Ascetica* of St. Nilus, he would have found all his charges against the monks substantially corroborated; he might have advanced the hermit of Sinai as a witness in behalf of that state of demoralization produced by the ascetic life, for which he quotes the priest of Marseilles. The *De Gubernatione Dei* of Salvian, and the *Ascetica* of Nilus, appeared in the same age, and both testify to a shocking and general amount of wickedness prevailing among the religious celibates; and by appealing to both writers, living remote from each other, the author of *Ancient Christianity* would have strengthened his case, by showing that no more in the east than in the west, is the Nicene Church a safe guide for us moderns to follow. Ample means of information upon the moral character of the men whom the Oxford divines parade before us as little lower than the angels, were possessed by Nilus. Though the greater part of his days were passed among the frightful defiles of Sinai, yet, in his earlier life, he had mixed much with the world. He was connected by descent and marriage with some of the most influential families in Constantinople, and had been entrusted with the civil government of the city. Chrysostom was his personal friend; the Emperor Arcadius sought his good offices; and his solitude was enlivened by frequent visitors, attracted thither by his sanctity, through whom he kept up a communication with the external world. If historical evidence, and not modern imaginations, is to decide the question whether the men and women of the fourth century, professing Christianity, had any moral superiority over the men and women who compose the church of the present day, the answer will be most emphatically, No, but that they were in most respects vastly inferior.

The writings of Nilus are well worth reading, not only as historical, but ethical documents. Though a slave to many of the superstitions of the day, he was free from its vices, and writes with honest fervour in the cause of practical godliness. His rules of life

are most of them sober and scriptural, and consequently adapted for the government of human conduct now. It was a grievous error, indeed, to retreat from a happy domestic circle into solitude; but even in this I think we must deal out to him more pity than blame. It was the error of the times, for which the authority of the greatest names might be pleaded, and he did not abuse it to any purpose of indolence, licentiousness, or wild fanaticism. Besides the *Ascetica*, there are several other productions of the same writer extant, such as *Sermons*, chiefly in fragments; *Counsels* addressed to Monks, in number thirty-two; *Discourses* against the eight vices, Gluttony, Lasciviousness, Avarice, Anger, Grief, Sloth, Vain-glory, and Pride; *Directions* concerning Prayer, amounting to one hundred and forty-seven; *Hortatory Sentences*, consisting of two hundred and twenty-nine aphorisms on the moral duties and feelings; a *Panegyric* on a Nitrian Monk, named Athinianus; an *Account* of the Slaughter of the Monks of Mount Sinai, in seven narrations; and a large collection of *Epistles*.

The correspondents of Nilus were very numerous, and included some of the most celebrated men of the age; his letters are generally instructive and always pleasing; some are learned, others familiar, and both the civil and ecclesiastical historian may derive much useful information from them. These epistles were printed separately at Rome, in folio, in 1668, edited by Leo Allatius, and afterwards his whole works appeared there in Greek and Latin in 1673. There is one of his letters addressed to the emperor Arcadius, which was written under the following circumstances. Soon after the banishment of Chrysostom from Constantinople, the city was threatened by an earthquake, and the emperor sent to the hermit of Sinai, to solicit his prayers for the safety of the capital. But Nilus was well aware of the doings within its walls; he was also the friend of the exiled prelate; he was in no humour therefore to attempt to pacify the fears of the emperor who had banished the bishop. On the contrary, he told him not to look for the protection of heaven in behalf of a city the seat of so many crimes, from whose walls the pillar of the church, the light of truth, the trumpet of Jesus Christ, had been unjustly driven! "How," said he, "can you desire to employ my prayers for a city which God in his anger punishes with earthquakes and the lightnings of heaven, by which it hourly expects to be consumed, whilst my own heart is itself consumed by the fire of affliction, and my spirit agitated by a continual trembling, caused by the excesses committed within its walls?"

The life of Nilus was a changeful one. Of illustrious birth in Constantinople he had every worldly reason to continue one of its citizens—affluent circumstances, powerful connections, a wife with two children whom he tenderly loved. But in an evil hour the religious fever of the times seized hold upon him, and his naturally strong understanding bowed before it. He felt himself called by a voice divine to forsake houses and lands and wife and children, for the kingdom of heaven's sake; grieved by the manifold iniquities of the world, he thought the path of duty to lie in literally complying with the words of the prophet, "Come, my people, enter thou into

thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment until the indignation be overpast." His purpose being once formed, he was not the man to hesitate about accomplishing it. One day, therefore, taking up his children in his arms, he announced his intention to his wife, to retreat from the mixed multitude, and give up all secular associations. He proposed taking one of the children, a boy, with himself, and leaving the other, a girl, in her care. He told her that it would be in vain to complain, for that his purpose was fixed, and she, aware of his decided character, made no opposition, and they separated after many tears. Sinai was the place to which he directed his steps. It was a sanctified spot in his esteem, for there the Divine presence had been gloriously revealed, and Moses in a cave had seen the heavenly Majesty. Besides, its savage scenery harmonized well with the stern temper of mind under which the recluse was acting. To a man of his stamp, the mount that once burned with fire, and was girt about with blackness, darkness, and tempest, could call up awful associations more in unison with his induced temperament, than any field which the Lord had blessed. The district was already occupied by many recluses, who passed their lives in the natural caverns with which it abounded, or in cells scooped out of the rocks by their own labours. Nilus soon obtained their respect by his austere habits, his grave deportment, his ability and readiness in deciding cases of conscience; and for many years he abode in the desert, content with his lot, while his boy grew up to man's estate, and his cell was often visited by the stranger anxious to see one who was known to be good and great.

Before leaving the capital, Nilus had stripped himself of all his possessions, and when he arrived in the desert he was in circumstances of the utmost destitution. He is supposed to be the person referred to in the following story, though it is not certain. When Joseph of Pelusium came into the neighbourhood of Sinai, he encountered a recluse, whose eloquent conversation yet miserable garb, excited his surprise. On the Sabbath he saw the same person at the place where the hermits assembled for prayer, still poorly clad, while the rest had clean white garments. Being told that he had no means of procuring a better dress, Joseph led him to his cell, and gave him a linen habit of his own, with other things necessary for his comfort. The desert, however, with all its privations, was far dearer to the recluse than the capital with its luxuries. When requested by his brethren to accompany a deputation going to Constantinople, to present an address to the emperor, he excused himself, assigning as his reason for declining the service, that he had formerly been the slave of a great lord at the court, referring to the emperor himself, who might constrain him to resume the station he had relinquished, if he returned. Asceticism with all its miseries he had voluntarily assumed, and he repined not under the hardships of his lot, but stuck to his bread and water in preference to all civic feasts. Contentment was not a virtue of which the most pious of the ascetics could always boast—even the vaunted Basil sometimes winced at the bondage to which he had subjected the flesh—Gregory

Nazianzen wrote to Amphilochius, to send him some fine pot-herbs, "if he did not wish to find Basil hungry and cross!"

But notwithstanding his meek endurance of assumed hardships, calamity came upon Nilus, in a form which tried him to the uttermost, and upon which he had not calculated. He had gone into the desert to escape from the world, but the world rudely forced itself upon his solitude. The Sinaite territory was invaded by a party of Saracens—many of the hermits were killed, the rest were scattered—Nilus and a few others escaping by taking refuge upon the summit of the mountain. He soon learnt that his son Theodulus had been taken captive by the enemy, and for a long time the unhappy father remained ignorant of his fate, but was certain of its being slavery or death. The Saracens sold their prisoner as a slave, and by singular good fortune he came into the possession of Hilarion, bishop of Elusium, who discovering his piety and talents, ultimately ordained him priest. Meanwhile Nilus abandoned Sinai, and went forth a wanderer in search of his son. After many anxious enquiries, and toilsome journeys, he succeeded in finding him at Elusium, where the bishop ordained the father to the priesthood, as he had previously done the son. Both, however, finally returned to their old abode in the desert of Sinai, and practised more rigorous self-denial than ever, in gratitude for the protection afforded them by Providence.

Such was the adventurous life of Nilus, which terminated about the middle of the fifth century. His name is little known to fame; his works are rarely met with, except incorporated with the minor patristical writings; he deserves, however, an honourable place among the fathers *medii ævi*; and should any one, having the opportunity, be tempted by this sketch to read his remains, he will find much to instruct and interest, and will meet with one quite as much entitled to the name of saint, and perhaps more so, than Basil, Cyril, and Jerom. He belonged to the class of monks, but the reader will soon see from his statements, respecting that class, that he was an exception, and not a specimen. This is the reason why his fellowship is eschewed by the Oxford tract writers; they might refer to him with pride in behalf of their system on the ground of his life, but his works show too plainly that almost every form of demoralization characterized the monachism of his age; they have no wish, therefore, to revive his memory. The poet, professor, and divine of Oxford, prefers indulging his own fancy as to what should be, rather than listening to the voice of history respecting what has been:

"When withering blasts of error swept the sky,
And Love's last flower seemed fain to droop and die.
How sweet, how lone the ray benign
On sheltered nooks of Palestine!
Then to his early home did Love repair,
And cheered his sickening heart with his own native air."

These lines are at utter variance with the truth. Nilus has given us his testimony, living hard by these "nooks;" and we have the report of one who, in the full glory of the Nicene age, personally

visited them, and who describes the "nooks of Palestine" as worse defiled than any other part of Christendom. The council of Antioch was held in the year 378, and a delegation was appointed by it to visit the eastern churches which had been harassed by the Arians,

"When withering blasts of error swept the sky."

The expences of the deputation were paid by the emperor, and it proceeded on its mission under Gregory of Nyssa. He resided for some time at Jerusalem with three pious and noble ladies, Eustathia, Ambrosia, and Basilissa; he visited the holy places which had once been honoured with the presence of the Saviour and his disciples; he expected to find a superior sanctity of mind and manners among the religious connected with such scenes; but he found vice, schism, and faction, and retreated in disgust back again to Antioch. There is an epistle of his on record to the ladies who had entertained him—a word of warning—cautioning them against the artifices of those who sought to make a prey of them. Afterwards, when asked whether it was an essential part of religion to make the tour of Palestine, one of the favourite notions of the day, he frankly declared that perils both to soul and body attended the pilgrim, that the journey might be dispensed with, and that the Spirit of God might more reasonably be expected in Cappadocia than in Jerusalem, where every species of immorality abounded.* So much for Nicene Christianity, as exhibited in the "sheltered nooks of Palestine!"

There is a description of Christianity among the works of the fathers, which was furnished before the age of monachism commenced, and which is far more scriptural than the views advanced by the men who met in council at Nice. It is not known who wrote the Epistle to Diognetus, though it is usually attributed to Justin Martyr—as improbable a supposition, from a comparison of style, as that the clear and polished periods in the Spectator, and the rough involved paragraphs of the Elizabethian authors were written by the same hand. The following passages are so true, beautiful, and apt to the occasion, that I quote them:

"The Christians are not separated from the rest of mankind by country, or by language, or by customs. They are confined to no particular cities, use no peculiarity of speech, adopt no singularity of life. Their doctrine embraces no tenet built upon the reasoning and subtlety of crafty men; neither do they, like others, uphold the opinion of any man. Dwelling in the cities, whether of Greeks or barbarians, as every man's lot is cast, following the customs of each country in dress, and diet, and manner of life, they yet display the wonderful and indeed astonishing nature of their own polity. They dwell in their own country, but as sojourners: they partake of all things, as denizens; they endure all things, as strangers. Every foreign land is their country; their own country is to each a foreign land. Like other men, they marry and have children; but their

* Greg. Nyss. Oratio de iis qui adeunt Hierosolymam. Epistola ad Eustathiam, Ambrosiam, et Basilissam.

children they expose not. They are in the flesh; but they live not after the flesh. They abide on earth; but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the laws which are established; and in their own lives are superior to the laws. They love all men; and are persecuted by all. Men know them not, yet condemn them. Being slain, they are made alive: being poor, they make many rich; deprived of all things, in all things they abound. Being dishonoured, they are thereby glorified; being calumniated, they are justified; being cursed, they bless: being reviled, they give honour. Doing good, they are punished as evil-doers: when punished, they rejoice, as being made alive. The Jews oppose them as a strange people: the Greeks persecute them; and they who hate them can allege no reason for their enmity.

"In a word, Christians are in the world what the soul is in the body. The soul is dispersed over all the members of the body; Christians over all the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, but is no part of the body; Christians dwell in the world, but are not of the world. The soul, invisible herself, is guarded in a visible body: Christians are known to be in the world, but their worship is unseen. The flesh hates the soul, which never injured it, and wars against it, because it is thereby prevented from indulging in its pleasures. The world hates Christians, who injure it not, because they are opposed to its delights. The soul loves the body, and the members which hate her. Christians also love their enemies. The soul is inclosed in the body, yet she restrains the body. Christians are shut up and guarded in the world, yet they restrain the world. The soul, herself immortal, dwells in a mortal tabernacle. Christians dwell among the corruptible, looking for an incorruptible state in the heavens. * * *

"God gave his own Son a ransom for us, the holy for the unholy, the innocent for the guilty, the just for the unjust, the incorruptible for the corruptible, the immortal for the mortal. For what else was able to cover our sins but only his righteousness? How should we disobedient and impious be justified, but only in the Son of God? O sweet interchange! O inscrutable dispensation! O benefits surpassing all expectation! that the iniquity of many should be hidden in the Just One; and the righteousness of one justify many sinners."

Oct. 2, 1840.

M.

PRACTICAL RESULTS OF A PROTRACTED MEETING.

(To the Editor.)

MY DEAR SIR—It is not without very considerable hesitation that I have at length determined to furnish you with the following particulars; the propriety of their publication will of course rest with yourself. The reason of my hesitancy was the consciousness of my own liability to be influenced by a wrong motive, or my possible exposure to suspicion, if innocent. My objection has been overruled by the repeated recommendation of my much honoured friend, Dr. Redford, of Worcester.

N. S. VOL. IV.

5 B

My communication relates to what I, in common with many around me, cannot but regard as a remarkable manifestation of divine power in the revival of religion.

The plan of protracted meetings considerably interested me from the commencement of their operation in our country. I accordingly made a trial of them in the years 1838 and 1839; but without any apparent success. Indeed, I have reason to fear that the result was more injurious than beneficial. This consequence naturally led to reflection. It did not shake my confidence in the utility of continuous services, but convinced me that I had erred in the mode of conducting them. The cause of my error was soon evident. It consisted in the sudden adoption of the plan in question, without any regard to the adequate preparation of the church or myself; in a false dependence on the measure itself, and in a misplaced confidence in human talent. Towards the close of last year, I resolved that if another attempt be made, the meetings should be conducted on very different principles. To this third experiment I now allude.

It has long been customary with the people under my pastoral care to hold a special prayer-meeting early in the morning of New Year's Day. The one that ushered in the present year was marked by unusual fervour and very solemn consecration to the divine service. Not an individual present failed to give very visible evidence of the peculiar depth of his emotions. My address was repeatedly interrupted by the intensity of my own feelings, and the audible expression of those of others. It was evidently a time of prevailing prayer. The meeting stands out distinguished in the recollection of many among the long series that preceded it. To the present time it is again and again reverted to as the beginning of our revival. In an annual letter which I addressed to my beloved charge a few weeks after, in allusion to this season, I expressed the following aspirations. "We have had the earnest—O that we may have the fulfilment! A few drops have fallen—O that the overflowing shower may come! We are beginning to awake—may God incline us to arise and work!"

I soon discovered a very altered character in the people. Prayer-meetings, to the extent of ten or twelve a week, spontaneously arose. Some were commenced without my knowledge, and all, as far as I recollect, at the suggestion of the people themselves. With the proposal for one of them I was much struck. A young man said, at a meeting of members, "We have a devotional meeting on Monday, and another on Friday, but the interval seems too long; cannot we meet early every Wednesday morning for the special purpose of imploring the large outpouring of the Holy Spirit on our society?" We met regularly at half-past six, A. M. and found that time pre-eminently delightful. All who came to that meeting came, in a peculiar sense, "with one accord." Thus our spiritual affairs continued till Easter. In the meanwhile I delivered a course of sermons on the revival of religion.

The Easter holidays affording a suitable opportunity, I convened a meeting of members, with a view to ascertain the state of spirituality in the church. None who came had any very distinct con-

ception of the precise object of the meeting, or of the mode of conducting it. After singing and prayer, I commenced the addresses by referring to the recent change, which was sufficiently visible in the church, and by describing my own christian experience during the previous four months. I then called upon the male members by name to express their sentiments respecting the state of religion in the church and in their own hearts. The effect of these simple addresses was perfectly electrical. Every speaker was completely unmanned. A long silence at one part of the meeting paid its tribute to the intensity of our feelings. I was called upon to speak, but, for a time, was quite unable to give utterance to my thoughts. The circumstance that affected us most, was the narration of christian experience given by two or three individuals who were once some of the most dissolute characters in the neighbourhood. O, never shall I forget the exquisitely simple statement of a man who was once a notorious swearer, drunkard, and sabbath-breaker. After labouring for a long time to gain the power of utterance, he said, "O what has God done for me! He has taken away a blaspheming heart, and he has given me a praying heart. He has given me a new hope and a new home." A member who was sitting by him at the time, had several times stood between him and his wife to prevent them from inflicting severe injuries on each other.

This meeting gave an additional impulse to the revival that had evidently commenced. One thing now occurred which convinced me that a real work was going on. I left home to attend the May meetings in London, but, on my return, found no diminution in the attendance at our special prayer-meetings, or in the interest felt by the members. All went on as usual. This convinced me that the work was the Lord's, and not man's.

At length, after several preparatory meetings, we resolved to have a protracted service. We felt ourselves in some measure ripe for a season of great revival. We determined to begin on the 21st of June. In the plan that we sketched out, we arranged to have, for one week, prayer-meetings every morning at seven, tent preaching near the chapel every evening at six p. m. and an adjourned service in the chapel immediately after, when prayers were to be offered and addresses given. I selected and arranged the topics of address, and invited a few neighbouring brethren to take them. I endeavoured to obtain the services of each brother for two or three days together, and invited those who appeared to me most deeply interested in revivals. I was resolved, in the invitation of ministers to assist, not to be determined by mere talent, or even popularity. It became apparent, after the first meeting, that the previous arrangement of subjects must be laid aside. My plan, too, as to the different speakers, was much altered. We felt that we were in God's hands, and were willing to go in whatever path he might direct. My own addresses, (for I gave two or three every evening, being convinced that the pastor, if he do not conduct the whole, should take the most prominent part on such occasions,) were in most cases left to the direction of the circumstances of the congregation. All the addresses delivered on the occasion were plain, applicatory, faithful;

and most of them related to the duty of immediate decision. After the first evening meeting, I invited all who felt deeply concerned for their salvation to meet me in the vestry. Three or four came. I repeated the invitation the next evening, and sixteen came. The next night we had, I believe, thirty. Thus the number went on increasing, till I obtained the names of one hundred and seventy individuals who felt deeply anxious for their souls. On the Thursday of the first week I received a document, signed by nearly fifty members, requesting the continuance of our protracted service into the next week. This was done, and we closed the whole engagements at the usual half-yearly tea-meeting of members on July 2d.

I now write on September 11th, and what is the result? The number of members whose names I have inserted in the book kept for that purpose, amounts, at this time, to more than two hundred. But have all kept steadfast? No. I have to weep over the decline of several. I know of from twelve to sixteen who, I fear, have returned to the world. They are not worse than they were; but they were merely convinced, not converted. Yet who knows that a wound may be left in their hearts, which will one day "be bound up" by him who has promised to "heal their backslidings?" At our last church meeting we admitted twenty-seven individuals. Since January, when I consider the work began, seventy members have been added to the church, and thirteen stand proposed for admission. Considering the number of hopeful cases that I still know of, and the number that stand proposed, I shall not be surprised if the increase throughout the year exceed one hundred members.

What class of persons, it may be asked, have been thus converted? Most of them have been regular attendants on a gospel ministry for some time. Some of them have been brought out of the world, and whose conversion, several months since, I should have pronounced in the highest degree improbable. Great astonishment has seized me in seeing them come to the inquiry class. By far the greatest number exceed twenty years of age. Some are in their maturity; others are far advanced in life.

I do not perceive that this event has occasioned very much difference in the appearance of the congregation, though some persons have been induced to become regular hearers, who never came before; but that the church generally has been greatly benefited by the season I have described, is very obvious. Eight or nine weekly meetings for religious conversation with members and inquirers, besides twelve weekly prayer-meetings, continue to be held. Many fresh members have entered upon departments of christian activity. Union prevails; and though the great excitement which the protracted meeting awakened, was likely to leave a corresponding exhaustion, still I consider the church has learned such lessons, engaged in such exercises, and received such evident answers to prayer, that I cannot doubt the good effected will be permanent and advancing.

In conclusion, I may be permitted to say, that the result of this third attempt has fully convinced me that a well-timed and well-

conducted protracted meeting is eminently calculated to produce great advantages. Its adaptation to usefulness arises from well-known principles in human nature; and the Holy Spirit always acts in concert with the divinely established laws of the mind. God does not give new faculties to the converted man. He only directs the exercise of those originally possessed. A supernatural influence does direct the process, but only, I humbly conceive, in the same way as the teacher's hand guides the pen which the pupil holds and which the pupil moves. Who knows not that the mind is powerfully impressed by any subject of thought in proportion to the *continuumness* of its meditation thereon? What is it that causes the world so completely to absorb the passions of the man of commerce but this *habitual* occupation in its affairs? Why may we not expect a similar result if we can secure *continued attention* to religious truth? Surely man *needs* the help of prolonged attention. For can it be supposed, speaking after the manner of men, that the mighty spell of worldly influence and sinful indulgence in which so many of our Sabbath-day hearers are involved, will be effectually broken by a single or a second address on the seventh day, attended, as that address generally is, with a sameness of mode and circumstance, which must, to a great extent, diminish its impressiveness? Perpetual change is an evil to be deplored; but perpetual monotony is, in such a matter as ministerial appeal, quite as injurious. Something is needed to break in upon the intrenchments with which the habit of hearing the gospel is calculated to inclose the secret love of sin. Something new is even more necessary to affect the masses who stroll past our various places of worship, seemingly as uninterested in the proceedings within as if the preacher and his hearers were convened for purposes of private speculation or compacted exclusiveness. Every new place of worship operates beneficially in attracting a few of these stragglers. But the regular inhabitants soon become accustomed to its walls, soon forget the passing congregation; and, if it invite them by a merry peal, soon become unconscious of the sound. We must have *out-door* preaching. We must *abound* in *itinerant* labours. The inconvenience which arises from the change of weather, and the contemptuous gaze of uninterested passers-by, is almost completely obviated by a *tent*. The tent itself is an attractive advertisement of the service, and gives every minister who is not trammelled by the restrictions of ecclesiastical formularies, an opportunity of going into whatever district he pleases, and proclaiming the gospel with as much freedom beneath the frowning majesty of a cathedral as in the midst of the meanest dwellings. Church extensionists may erect building against building; they are not likely to erect tent against tent. But if we were to provoke them to this, who would not rejoice?

Sincerely hoping that the above statements will be deemed worthy of your acceptance, and conduce, in some humble measure, to the extension of the blessings of vital religion,

I remain, my dear Sir,

Your's very truly,

J. C. GALLAWAY.

Westbromwich, Sept. 11, 1840.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

(To the Editor.)

MY DEAR SIR,—I have long had it on my mind to say a word to you, and, by your permission, through you, to my brethren in the ministry of the gospel, who may be readers of your widely circulated Magazine, upon the importance of preaching nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified. In doing this, I would disclaim any thing coming near to arrogance with respect to myself, or censure as it regards others, but would simply endeavour to express to you, and, with not a little distrust of myself, what has been for some time my deep conviction. Is our practice generally, as ministers of the gospel, and I would not be understood to refer to our own denomination alone, in as strict accordance as it should be, with that of the only infallible models—of our blessed Lord, who, when on earth, always preached *himself*? and of his apostles, evangelists, and teachers, who never preached any other than *him*? Is it not in the New Testament plain, that its models of all ministers and teachers considered the subject of their preaching to be, *not things*, so much as persons, and chiefly,—I had almost said exclusively,—the person of the Lord Jesus Christ? In the nine or ten inspired sermons of the Acts of the Apostles, is not Jesus Christ the theme of them all? and in the epistles, are not his name and the different words, such as personal and relative pronouns that stand for it, the teeming subject of every paragraph and of every page? Is it not a fact that the divine names, the names of Jesus, occur in the New Testament very much more frequently than the name of man? And does not this show that we may not seek to explain away such an expression as preaching him, and him crucified; as if it might be interpreted to take in the preaching of all kinds of knowledge, and to embrace all diversities of intellectual and moral system? Are we not given to understand that the world, by the wisdom of God, did not know him; but that after he had given to them a trial of four thousand years, by spreading before their successive generations the works of his own wisdom, the manifestations of his eternal power and godhead; and they had prayed unto the stars above, and unto the creatures of the earth below; and the result of all was universal ignorance of God; that then he resolved on saving the world by the foolishness of preaching; by the proclamation of a person crucified, dead, buried, raised, ascended, living, interceding, reigning? Now I have felt strongly that we, in this age of knowledge, are in danger of trying to do again what four thousand years were given for, to no purpose; to save men by *science*; to preach *things*. I have been afraid that in this age, where popularity is so highly esteemed, we should yield to the temptation of preaching what is undoubtedly the most popular of all subjects of preaching, and will be, until Jesus Christ have gained the majority on earth;

namely, *man*; describing him, depicting him, appealing to him, letting him hear about himself in our sermons; instead of endeavouring to unveil the Son of God to him; preaching *man*, in a great diversity of states it may be, and with respect to things that are interesting to him, it is admitted, but still preaching *man*; rather erring by leaving out the grand subject, than by saying any thing directly against him; erring by not doing what is right, rather than by doing what is wrong. Is it not important, then, since the taste of the age absolutely forbids an ample exposition of the Scriptures, the best, if not the only real kind of preaching, in the humble opinion of your correspondent, that every text we fix upon should have some direct truth concerning the person of the Lord Jesus Christ in it? And are we not in danger of choosing texts, such as it may be supposed will be soothing and comforting to some classes of believers, apart from thinking whether they be or be not texts that contain the living substance of the life-giving gospel? I am afraid, my dear Sir, of wearying you with my interrogatories; but I would just beg further to add—have we a right to believe that the Holy Spirit will pour forth his energies into the hearts of men in connexion with preaching, except upon one subject—the gospel; the living, manifested, incarnate Word? Is not the general representation by our Lord, before his death, of the office of the Holy Spirit, conclusive on this subject? That he will convince the world of sin, because they do not believe on *Christ*; of righteousness, because *Christ* is no more visible on earth, therefore he must be revealed in heaven in glory; of judgment, because *Christ* has judged and cast out the prince of this world? Does it not thus appear that the manifestations of the Holy Spirit to all classes of persons on earth, are inseparably associated with the person of the Son of God, the Son of Man? I have had some thoughts also upon the worship of this divine person, the second in the order of mention of the glorious Trinity, as to whether the worship of him expressly be not a thing too much neglected; with which thoughts, should these sentiments prove acceptable, I may hereafter trouble you; and in the mean time I remain,

My dear Sir, affectionately and sincerely your's,

G. BARROW KIDD.

Macclesfield, Oct. 8, 1840.

P. S.—It will not be understood that it is intended, in the observations above, to exclude any kind of appeal to man; of remonstrance, persuasion, argument, or description, but still to make the subject of discourse, Jesus; and every part of it impregnated with the virtue of his atoning sacrifice, and pervaded by the life and energy of his present Spirit.

FRAGMENTS OF PURITAN HISTORY.

No. VII.

WE find it difficult to calculate the amount of mischief brought into the christian church, by the imposition of subscription to human creeds and articles of faith; it is a well-known fact, that multitudes of puritan ministers who refused subscription, because they could neither resist their convictions, sacrifice their consciences, nor trample on their principles, were treated by the bishops with wanton cruelty. The prelates were urged forward in this unrighteous warfare, not only by the sanction and stimulating influence of Queen Elizabeth, but also by those dominant notions which they had derived partly from the antichrist of Rome, and partly from their worldly exaltation. Though all this was in perfect accordance with the station they occupied, and extremely soothing to human pride; yet no infatuation could be more injurious to religion, or more opposed to the spirit and instructions of the gospel. The celebrated Sir Francis Knollys, one of her Majesty's privy council, the patron of humanity, and pre-eminently distinguished for piety and uprightness, wishing to counteract this enormous evil, addressed the following letter to Archbishop Whitgift, dated Westminster, June 8, 1584:

" My very good Lord,

" If your grace have not done with my book of notes, it may please you to keep it until the next term, or otherwise return it to me at your own pleasure. Your grace doth know how much my poor estate is bound to wish and pray for, and to be careful of, her Majesty's safety; not only by general duty of conscience, but also by the strong bonds of nature. And I do know that her Majesty doth repose the truth of the virtuous and good politic government of the Church of England especially in your hands. Although it doth import her Majesty's greatness, that, in this government, a special regard must be had, that her Majesty's safety, and the good preservation of her Majesty's person, crown, and dignity, be not impaired, but fortified; and not laid open to the undermining Jesuits and their traitorous scholars and diligent followers; but fenced and defended with plenty, and diligent and zealous preachers of the gospel, to stir up true obedience to her Majesty, in the fear of God; and to draw her Majesty's subjects from that treasonable obedience to the see and Popish Church of Rome. Your grace's wisdom and learning doth well know, that by natural corruption, we, her Majesty's subjects, are in general headily given to superstition and idolatry; which are the arms of the Pope, to draw us into his pompous, glittering kingdom of strong delusions: where, in his throne of majesty, he looketh disdainfully upon the despised flock of Christ in this world, that will not be marked in the forehead, nor drink of the cup of that whore of Babylon, filled with all abominations. And since this mighty offending of God, and of her Majesty, so full of treasonable practices, cannot be withstood but by opening the mouths of preachers, zealous and sound in doctrine, although as men, they have otherwise infirmities, as well in discretion, as in difference of judgment concerning matters politic and things indifferent. Therefore, I do presume again, as I have done aforetime, most humbly to beseech your grace to *open the mouths* of all zealous preachers, that be sound in doctrine, howsoever, otherwise they may refuse to subscribe to any tradition of man, not compellable by law, or be infirm as before is said. Although herein I may seem to some to speak superfluously like a fool, yet I trust your grace will think, that I speak like a faithful subject to her Majesty, according to that small measure of wit and

understanding that God hath given me. Thus, with all humbleness, I take my leave of your grace.

“Your grace’s to command,

“F. KNOLLYS.”*

One dangerous error usually leads to another. The dominant prelates, not satisfied with oppressing and persecuting the faithful ministers of Christ, begun to assume the *divine right* of their order, and the consequent superiority of bishops as appointed by God. This dangerous error created great alarm, and Sir Francis Knollys wrote several letters to the Lord Treasurer, Burghley, in one of which he addressed his lordship as follows:—

“I have received your lordship’s letter of the first of August, wherein I have received very little comfort, and small hope of good maintenance of her Majesty’s safety, consisting in the sincere maintenance of her Majesty’s supreme government, against the covetous ambition of usurping rulers. Your lordship saith, that the question is very disputable, whereof I wrote unto your lordship; and I must needs confess, that Campion’s disputation against the humility of Christ’s doctrine, and for the advancement of antichrist’s doctrine, was not only allowed to be disputable, but also that it was very plausible in the minds of all those who favoured the worldly pomps of church government. The nature of covetous ambition in church government, hath always despised the humble and base style of Christ’s doctrine and government. The high priests and the great governors of the church of the Jews, when Christ came unto them, made it disputable, whether Christ was worthy to die or not; but their disputation lasted not long; for the proud ambitious rulers of the church resolved quickly, that Christ was worthy to die; and Christ, bewailing the proud ambitious government of the scribes and pharisees, burst out and said, ‘O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets.’ Whereby it appeareth, that the church government in all times that is stuffed with the ambition of worldly rule in the church could never away with the humility of Christ’s heavenly doctrine, and of his heavenly and spiritual rule in the church.

“As touching the superiority of bishops to be disallowed as a false claim, it seemeth to me, that Christ himself hath plainly decided the matter, when his apostles at two sundry times seemed to murmur and strive who should be the greatest, after Christ’s departure from them, where, it seems to me, that Christ plainly condemned all claiming of superiority among the apostles. The church’s rule, if our bishops would follow it, as no doubt they would, if her Majesty’s supreme government were stoutly maintained; then they would be contented to forbear their claimed superiority of government in the church, which Christ condemned in the apostles; and they would be satisfied with that equality which Christ left to his church among the apostles. But here you must not take me to deny, that bishops may have any lordly authority or dignity they have enjoyed, so that they claim it not from Christ’s authority, but directly from her Majesty. I do not mean hereby to contend with your lordship, through whose assistance I have always hoped that her Majesty’s safety, consisting in the true maintenance of her Majesty’s supreme government, should be zealously preserved.

“Your lordship must pardon me, although I do not think that her Majesty’s safety is any the better preserved, because our bishops dare not oppose themselves and their credit against her Majesty’s supreme government; for it is the Jesuits, and not our bishops, that must bring her Majesty’s safety into peril, if this maxim may be allowed unto the said Jesuits, that our bishops of England are not under-governors to her Majesty over the clergy; but that their superior government over the said inferior clergy is God’s own ordinance. Whereupon it must needs follow, that her Majesty is not supreme governor over the clergy,

* Lansdowne’s MSS. Vol. xliii. No. 9.

if so be that our said bishops be not under-governors to her Majesty, but supreme governors from a higher claim than directly from her Majesty. But my trust is, that the cause of your lordship's writing unto me, that the question is very disputable, is not that your lordship is of that opinion, but rather that your lordship would bridle and stay me from running too fast before your lordship, in the matter of her Majesty's safety. Although I have always been, and must ever be, plain with your lordship in this matter, yet, if it shall please your lordship to set all the bishops and all their favourers against me, to prove me a disturber of their government in suppressing the preachers or otherwise, your lordship shall find that none of them shall be able to prove any substantial matter against me, since the time that her Majesty at Windsor did command me, that I should not deal with the puritans, as then her Majesty called them; because her Majesty did commit the government of religion to her bishops only: since which time I have dealt no more with matters of religion, than doth appertain to her Majesty's safety, consisting in the true preservation of her Majesty's supreme government. This may best be called matter of her Majesty's policy, and not matter of religion: although the Jesuits call all their treasons matter of religion.

"Thus, fearing that I have been too bold with your lordship, although I do know your lordship doth love to have all men's opinions, that your wisdom may the better judge thereof, I do most humbly take my leave, at Dwilline Lodge, the 4th of August, 1589.

"Your lordship's to command,

"F. KNOLLYS."

Sir Francis, having received a publication from Lord Burghley, sent his lordship, during the same month, the following epistle:

"My very good lord,

"I have perused your courtly learned divine his writing, which you sent me; and I am glad your lordship did mislike his answer to the beginning of my book. Though I am not worthy to judge of matters of divinity; yet I think this divine courtier hath much more audacity than truth, in his answer to the writing of the grave and learned man, (meaning no doubt Dr. John Rainolds) which he mentioned unto you, touching the superiority of bishops. And I know but one chaplain of her Majesty, that would write with such audacity against the plain truth of Scripture. For he saith that because St. Paul did appoint Timothy and Titus to ordain elders in every congregation; he, therefore, takes it proved, that they had superiority over other elders. Wherefore, if that be proved which your worthy divine would seem to have for proof, may be allowed unto them, then I do not marvel, that our bishops' claim of superiority may be allowed to have some show of truth, to make it disputable. But I return the same divine courtier's answer, desiring your lordship that you may find the same answer to be replied unto, by the grave and learned man aforesaid. The cause of this my desire is, that your good lordship might judge indifferently between the said grave and learned man, and your courtly divine; which of them doth speak according to the humble Spirit of Christ; and which of them doth speak according to the proud spirit of antichrist, and of his maintainer, Dr. Allen and the Jesuits.

"I do most humbly beseech your lordship to pardon my boldness, in standing against this claimed superiority of bishops. I am persuaded that her Majesty's safety against all popish doctrine, is especially to be defended by the denial of this claimed superiority; which is, and hath been, the foundation of all popery, and the overthrow of the supreme government of princes. This supreme government of princes is so plainly taught in St. Peter's general epistle, that I need not to speak any more thereof. Christ himself denied to have any such superiority over the bodies or estates of clergymen or others; because his kingly government in this world was not over the bodies, but over the souls, of such as did believe in his heavenly doctrine; and he forbade superiority among his apostles.

But I will trouble your lordship no further at this time; and, therefore, with my humble commendation, I take my leave of your lordship. This 15th of August, 1589.

"Your lordship's to command,

"F. KNOLLYS."*

Sir Francis addressed another epistle to his lordship the 18th of September, observing that prelatical superiority was appointed by "the wisdom of men;" and he agreed with his lordship, "that none of our bishops could maintain the contrary; although their claimed superiority, and their unlawful using of subscription, doth show their ambition and covetousness, to the prejudice of her Majesty's supreme government."† He afterward addressed an epistle to Burghley, as follows:

"My very good lord,

"Your lordship knows how violent the archbishop hath often been against the request of the parliament in behalf of suffering ministers; and how greatly, if not tyrannically, the archbishop hath urged subscription to his own articles without the law; and your lordship doth also know how plainly the said archbishop, in his book against Cartwright, hath claimed the right of all bishops and superiority belonging to them, over all inferior clergy, from God's own ordinance, to the popish injury of her Majesty's supreme government. It is no sufficient recompence for the archbishop to say barely, that he does not claim, at present, a superiority over the inferior clergy, from God's own ordinance; but that he also retracts this claim, as printed in his book against Cartwright. Without which retraction, her Majesty's supreme government, as I think, can neither be saved, nor preserved. In my opinion, the faithful duty of English subjects goeth backwards, and the increase of recusants goeth forwards, continually to the danger of her Majesty's safety by the said claim of superiority openly printed, and sometimes openly practised, and by the open urging of submission against the law!

"I do most humbly beseech your lordship, in the fear of God, according to your great wisdom, it will please you to have a zealous care of her Majesty's extreme danger, so violently intended and laboured by the Pope and the king of Spain, and by these confederates in this dangerous time. My opinion is, that the only way to save her Majesty from the danger aforesaid, is to abate the ambition and covetousness of bishops, by making them to acknowledge, that they have no superiority over the inferior clergy, but from her Majesty's supreme authority, granting them that superiority by the statute of the 25 of King Henry VIII.; and the same renewed in the first year of her Majesty. By which statute the bishops are barred from offending her Majesty's prerogative royal, and from offending the laws and customs of the realm: whereby the said bishops are not only subject to the supreme government of her Majesty, but also subject and answerable to the counsellors of state in that behalf, contrary to their unbridled claim of superiority, and contrary to their unbridled practice of urging subscription to their unlawful articles.

"Thus craving pardon for troubling your lordship, I shall most humbly commit your good lordship to the merciful protection of our Almighty God. At Greenwich this last of March, 1590.

"Your lordship's to command,

"F. KNOLLYS."‡

This celebrated statesman further declared to Burghley, that archbishop Whitgift ought to be required to make an *open recantation*

* Lansdowne's MSS. vol. lxi. No. 57.

† Ibid. No. 66.

‡ Ibid. vol. lxiv. No. 32.

of the dangerous doctrine contained in his book against Mr. Cartwright. Jesus Christ, said he, evidently confessed, that his kingdom was not of this world; he, therefore, gave no worldly rule or pre-eminence to his apostles, but commanded them to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." He added, if Mr. Cartwright would have no ecclesiastical government, as he was accused by his enemies, the bishops "cared for no government but that which was *worldly* and *forcible* over their brethren, which Christ never gave to his apostles!"* This distinguished christian statesman, also, reminded Burghley, that he marvelled how her Majesty could be persuaded that there was equal danger from those called Puritans, as there was from the Papists; since her Majesty could not be ignorant that the Puritans were unable to effect any change in the government of the church, except only by petition to her Majesty. And that even her Majesty could not do this, without an Act of Parliament; and no act could pass and become law, without her royal assent. He added—"If the bishops, or my lord Chancellor, or any for them, could have proved, *de facto*, that Cartwright and his fellow-prisoners had gone about their matters seditiously, then Cartwright and his fellows had been hanged before this time."†

It is not difficult to conceive, Mr. Editor, what the Hooks, and Philpotts, and apostolical succession-men of our times, if governed by honest truth, would be constrained to infer from the foregoing historical facts. If there was, indeed, any episcopal succession in the days of Elizabeth, was it not a succession from the queen, who made them bishops, and could at any hour unmake them, rather than from the apostles, who had nothing to do in the affair? The early reformers considered the Romish church as "the whore of Babylon, and the mother of harlots;" but another generation arose, who, invested with vast power, and governed by worldly interest, accounted her ministers apostolical; because, forsooth, they had been ordained by a bishop! These new-fashioned churchmen disowned all unbishoped churches as a spurious brood, and their ministers were, therefore, said to be in "pretended holy orders." To persuade episcopal dignitaries, that their office possessed a peculiar measure of sanctity, and that no other sect was entitled to the smallest portion of this mysterious virtue, was peculiarly flattering to the pride of human nature, and pre-eminently calculated to promote their worldly emolument. It was perfectly natural for these high-toned, protestant papists to maintain the clerical dignity as "an uninterrupted and unbroken succession from the apostles."

How was this apostolical succession then finally adjusted? Why, Mr. Editor, it was settled by Act of Parliament! When Queen Elizabeth made Dr. Matthew Parker Archbishop of Canterbury, the whole bench of bishops, opposing the reformation, refused to consecrate him. Not one of them would have any share in this business. The persons who consecrated Parker had been *deprived* and *unbishoped*, for being heretics; and this was done by that church from which the succession is said to be derived; and having

* Strype's Whitgift, p. 389.

† Lansdowne's MSS. vol. lxvi. No. 52.

never been restored, the supposed succession was, therefore, absolutely lost; and no portion of apostolic descent remaining, they could not communicate any to Parker. Queen Elizabeth's first archbishop having been effectually cut off from the mysterious apostolical descent, all the rest of the bishops and clergy consequent upon it, were necessarily cut off; so that they have at this moment no more apostolical succession than any other class of the community. They might as well claim their succession from Mahomed, or from the priests of Juggernaut, as from the apostles; and, as it would in either case be equally true, so it would be equally advantageous to the validity of the ministerial function. The archiepiscopal consecration of Parker, according to the maxims of churchmen, and even on the principles of the pretended succession, was a mere assumption; and all the acts in that solemn transaction, on the same grounds, were null and void. Here was a manifest breach in the succession; but, after the lapse of *seven years*, a remedy was provided for re-uniting, in one unbroken line, the broken succession of popish and protestant episcopacy; and though it may appear somewhat marvellous, an Act of Parliament was passed, which professedly secured the validity of Parker's consecration, and that of all his successors; and our learned author adds, that this was *very necessary*!* The succession was thus made dependent on an Act of Parliament, and not on any official descent from the apostles. But if the apostolical succession did not, in fact, previously exist, how could an Act of Parliament make it exist? If the first consecration was not, in itself, apostolically valid, how could an Act of Parliament, seven years after, give it apostolical virtue? This, Mr. Editor, is the root and origin of protestant episcopacy in England; and the boasted succession is a succession from the king, or it may be, the queen, and not by any unbroken line from the apostles. The reverend bishops of our times derive their official existence from the king or queen of England, and he or she who made them what they are, can at any time unmake them. What, then, becomes of their apostolical succession? We need not inquire whether this mysterious succession create gifts and graces. The episcopal minister, ordained by a bishop, is introduced to his official exercises; when "he reads a series of prescribed prayers, and performs a series of religious ceremonies, the validity of which depends not at all on his intellectual or moral endowments, but on that something, neither intellectual nor moral, which passed into his head from the hands of the ordaining bishop!"†

We have been accustomed to believe that the Bible *alone* is the religion of Protestants; but these new-fashioned sectaries have erected another standard of judgment. We do not inquire whether this new scheme is preferable to the Bible; but it indispensably requires, that he who administers the word and ordinances of Christ must possess a certain distinctive qualification derived from Popery, yet absolutely unauthorized by the word of God; and a minister, say they, must be apostolically descended, or all his ministrations will be mockery

* Strype's Parker, p. 61.

† Christian Spectator, vol. viii. p. 617.

to God and unprofitable to souls! Compared with this human device, can you, Mr. Editor, discover any error more dangerous, or any delusion more palpable, in the whole system of Popery? Apostolical succession-men, entrenching themselves under this infatuation, would do well to prove their own innocence, before they condemn sober Christians of fanaticism. Do reverend prelates then blaze abroad this modern imposture to advance protestant popery, and to create in the minds of ignorant and misguided people, a mystical reverence and admiration of their arrogant and disgusting superiority? This ecclesiastical assumption, wholly the contrivance of man, you are aware, Mr. Editor, is followed by its natural consequences—ostentatious pomp, worldly splendour, lordly domination, and absurd, if not profane, titles. Are these, then, clear indications of their apostolical, or their anti-apostolical character? Are these features faithful exhibitions of the spirit and practice of Christ, or are they not significant memorials of the spirit and practice of Antichrist?

B. B.

OTHER REMARKS ON DECAYED AND DECAYING CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

(To the Editor.)

SIR,—THE following fact was related to me a few days ago. A number of gentlemen, in a merry mood, resolved to amuse themselves with one of their less discerning acquaintances. They agreed to meet him, one by one, in different places on the same day, to tell him how ill he looked, and how much they were concerned at his sickly appearance. The first met him on his way to the market, and after saluting him in the most friendly manner, asked if he was unwell, and received for answer, "I never was better in my life." At this he expressed great surprise, and said, "You certainly look very ill." A second, a third, and a fourth met him on the same day, accosted him in a similar manner, and made similar observations. The man, not suspecting any joke, much less any mischief, began to think there must be some truth in their opinion. His countenance fell; he went home, sickened, took to his bed, and died. Had he only sickened, and incurred some expense in medical attendance, his acquaintances had been well satisfied; but when he was dead they felt they had trespassed on frail humanity too far; they took with regret the painful lesson thus taught them, and resolved to do no more so wickedly.

I have long been convinced that it contributes nothing to the restoration of "decayed and decaying congregational churches," nor of any other churches, to talk and to write publicly about their decay; especially when the talkers or writers are, or affect to be, of the party, and to deplore the fact. It is, in my view, more likely to help on the decay than to remove it. For instance, when it begins to be frequently talked in the vicinity of a place of worship, that very few people attend it, none are thereby *encouraged* to go;

some that would go are induced to stay away ; some that are going are induced to attend less frequently, till they altogether cease, and till the remnant that is left is like "the grape gleanings when the vintage is past." Then no other place can be found where to lay the sin but at the minister's door ; and there it is unceremoniously left, with some eulogium on his piety and goodness. It is an easy thing either to puff up or to puff down, and in these days much is done by puffing.

The paper of X. in your number for September, appears to me exceedingly unfair, because the *only* reason he assigned for the decay he complains of, is that there are old ministers retaining office, the "powers of whose minds are incapable of accomplishing what is required in the present day of active movement and determined competition." Admitting that such a cause exists, it must necessarily be in very few instances ; for an overwhelming majority of ministers have not yet passed the meridian of life. By assigning that reason *only*, X. has (undesignedly, I doubt not,) planted thorns in the pillows of some heads that deserve better things, sharpened weapons against some good and honest hearts that might justly be spared, and sown seeds of future annoyance for some that are worthy to reap a better crop. Your correspondent of last month, "A Minister," &c. who, like myself, is yet too young to be affected by the remarks of X., has written well on the subject, and he has my thanks for his paper. In addition to what he has written so well, I ask, could not X. find many, and some of them much more weighty reasons, than that of which *alone* he complains ? Supposing that he has found in "some of our towns—it may be county towns and other important central stations," such worn-out ministers as he complains of, might he not have found in such "stations" decay from causes with which the minister, to his comfort, has had nothing to do, and over which, to his sorrow, he could have had no controul ? Was there not, in one station, a great red dragon, whose tail drew away a third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth ? in another, men who arose, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them ? in another, a people that bit and devoured one another, till they were consumed one of another ? Were there not, in another, profane babblings, which eat as doth a canker ? in another, a want of deacons that are grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience ? and in another, a people of careless habits and indolent repose, "who said that that dieth let it die ; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off ; and let the rest eat, every one the flesh of another." In such stations, men of eminent piety and of efficient talent may preach the glorious gospel of the ever-blessed God, but Israel is not gathered, and Zion does not break forth on the right hand nor on the left. Micah may flatter himself with great assurance, saying, "Now I know that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest ;" but what avails it, so long as he has a graven and a molten image and a house of gods, even though he has an ephod and a teraphim together with them ?

If the stations of old men are decayed, let it be considered how

the stations are that are occupied by the young. Are they generally large? Do they generally flourish? The talents, the training, the habits of very many of the young, are as well adapted as any thing can be, "to meet the wants of the present generation:" they are "in labours more abundant," and yet they have to lament the want of success. If for a season they seemed successful, they again witnessed a proportionate decline. They behold, and lo, the fruitful place is a wilderness! and all the birds of the heaven are fled!! They deserve sympathy, for they mourn; they need encouragement, for they are ready to faint. These are no times for the old to carp at the young, as vain, volatile, and inexperienced; nor for the young to burlesque the old, as conceited, demure, and worn out. They are rather times for the old and the young together to weep between the porch and the altar, and to say, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?"

As to prosperity; it is a matter of great thankfulness that there is much of it in many places. Yet there is not so much of it by far as many persons reckon upon. There is in almost every neighbourhood, a chapel which is attended on a Sabbath evening, rather as a place of resort, than as a place of worship. It is then full, and sometimes to overflowing, but the attendance, in the other parts of the day, is not much to be accounted of, and perhaps it is shut up in the afternoon that it may be fuller at night. But of what is that surplus attendance composed? Partly of those who belong to other congregations, and who, were their own places open, would be with their own people, and partly, and even in greater numbers, of them who on God's holy day do their own ways and find their own pleasure, and speak their own words, till the evening comes, and then they dress and sally forth to "the chief place of concourse." No religious prosperity is to be inferred from them who never hallow the Sabbath until night. Owls and bats, that do not appear till the twilight, are not wont to gaze on the Sun of Righteousness. Such congregations have a disproportionate number of young people who, though they exhibit something hopeful and promising, cease their attendance when they cease to be young. A bustling Sabbath evening congregation is pleasing, but it is no safe criterion of religious prosperity in them that compose it, nor in the vicinity where they dwell.

Allow me, before I conclude, to refer your readers to a fact somewhat amusing, and which, perhaps, few of them have noticed. Just thirteen years ago your Magazine (see vol. for 1827, page 534) was made the medium of a complaint similar to that of X., viz. the inefficiency of ministers, and the consequent decay of Congregational churches. But then the *young* ministers were said to be deficient, and required to be provided for, and not the *old* ones. The latter were then treated as fountains of wisdom and conservatives of all that was true, good, and useful in the churches; and were invited to write essays to teach their younger brethren how "to exhibit and enforce gospel truths from the pulpit." Conformity to modern modes and

customs in preaching, and to the advanced state of education, was disapproved. It was then spiritedly asked, "Can it be that a notion prevails that because education is now so generally extended, new modes of preaching must be adopted?" It was remarked, "that too frequently instead of the sincere milk of the word—the old-fashioned simple exhibition, and pathetic application of gospel truth, the audience is amused with a wordy unevangelical harangue; or if evangelical matter be introduced, it is only incidentally." Against the attack of that assailant, the young preachers of that time were zealously defended in a paper inserted page 646 of the same volume, in which paper it was also pleaded that Congregational churches were more numerous than they had ever been before, and in a better state.

Through what different courses, different persons would direct "the angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth!" But he has another master, even Christ; and he deems it better to obey God than men. With some the old are faulty, and with some the young; but I will say to them all, and let the church of God say to them all, "Now the God of peace which brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Mr. Editor, I am, very respectfully,

ONE OF YOUR OLDEST READERS.

October 8th.

HINTS RESPECTING CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY.

(To the Editor.)

DEAR SIR—I have just finished reading, with no small advantage to myself as a minister, a very able and impressive anonymous letter, written by a layman in the year 1746, and addressed to dissenting ministers. About the time it was written, the spirit of slumber had seized upon many of our churches. Many forsook *the assembling of themselves together*. Of those who attended the sanctuary, many had become cold and formal. Little hope remained that the rising generation would fill the seats which their fathers had left, or were soon likely to leave vacant. The drift of the letter now referred to, is to account for this state of things. Towards the end of it, the writer addresses himself to those ministers who were entrusted with the education of young men for the christian ministry. As his remarks on this important subject are exceedingly judicious, and as active measures are now taking by the Directors of the Home Mission to secure for their agents a sound and efficient theological education, it has occurred to me that you would have no objection to insert, in the pages of your valuable periodical, the following extract:

"Before I conclude this address, give me leave to apply myself, in a particular manner, to such ministers as are any ways concerned in the education of youth for the ministry; it appears to me that either the nature and importance of the trust itself, or the methods of executing it, have not been so carefully considered

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or attended to as they ought, either with respect to the *choice* of the youth themselves or their education *afterwards*.

"In respect of the choice of the youth for this arduous and important service, two qualifications seem absolutely requisite :

"A natural capacity for literature and for speaking handsomely in public. A true seriousness of spirit and desire of the ministry for right ends.

"The necessity of these qualifications is so obvious, that I think nothing needs be said to evince it. But I am aware of two excuses that may be urged.

"1. That *there are many places in the country where men of shallow capacities and low attainments may be useful.*

"I answer, would not men of superior talents and furniture, in all human probability, be capable of greater usefulness, even in the meanest congregations? Do we not find that gentlemen of education and fortune in the neighbourhood of such congregations, on this account, generally attend the worship of the Established Church, or refrain from attending public worship at all, who might, if the case were otherwise, be the support and encouragement of such poor congregations, and ease the city of London of a very great burden? True learning, under the direction of a good understanding and undissembled piety, qualifies a man to be equally useful and amiable amongst the poor and the rich.

"II. The greater objection is, that *such youth are difficult to be found.*

"I am able to give no answer to this, except that no pains are too great to be taken by those who are engaged in this trust, to *find* them; and that, I fear, very little have been taken. Ministers too readily fall in with the solicitations of parents, or depend on the partial character of friends or parents, by no means sufficient judges, considering that *that money is worse than lost which is applied to educate a weak and incompetent youth for so important a charge as that of the souls of men in a day of growing infidelity and lukewarmness in religion.* But this is not all: when care has been taken in their choice, allow me to say the following rules seem deserving of more record than they have generally met with :

"1. That such youth be made fully sensible that all that can be done for them at the academy, though tutors and students be ever so diligent during the time allotted them for that purpose, is to give them such a general acquaintance with languages, systems, and sciences, as to lay a foundation for their after improvements in true and substantial learning and knowledge, both human and divine; the attainment of which is to go hand in hand with the discharge of their ministerial work, and to be the constant aim and pursuit of their whole lives; whereas, I doubt they are too apt to imagine themselves completely equipped for the service when they have passed their trial, and have received a testimonial of their qualifications to enter upon the work of the ministry.

"2. That their designed office of public speakers and pleaders for religion be constantly kept in view from the time of their being introduced into the academy till their removal from it, and such exercises appointed them as may be most likely to form them to a readiness of reasoning clearly, and pronouncing properly and acceptably upon any subject or occasion; and their proficiency herein, attended by their tutors, be an essential part of their education, that every ill or awkward habit may be early checked and broken, and the most easy and graceful ones promoted.

"3. Such youth should be taught the strictest *self-government*, and the inuring themselves to hard study and other difficulties, and should be made sensible that their profession, if the duties of it are attended to as they ought to be, will not allow them the avocations and amusements of men in trade and other professions; and that to be a minister of common rank requires the qualifications that would render a private Christian distinguished and eminent.

"4. They should be taught to despise worldly honour, profit, and applause, as what cannot be expected for men of their character; for which reason they should prepare themselves for labouring with indefatigable zeal and diligence in the discharge of their trust, under a variety of difficulties and discouragements, that they may secure the final approbation of their gracious Lord and Master as the only certain and adequate reward of their services."

R E V I E W.

Discourses on special Occasions, by the late Rev. R. S. M'All, LL.D.; with a Sketch of his Life and Character, by the Rev. R. Wardlaw, D.D. 2 vols. 8vo. Jackson and Walford. 1840.

Funeral Services occasioned by the lamented Death of the Rev. R. S. M'All, LL.D. of Manchester; by the Rev. Thomas Raffles, D.D. LL.D., the Rev. John Ely, and the Rev. John Angell James. 8vo. Hamilton, Adams, and Co. 1838.

A Characteristic Sketch of the late Rev. R. S. M'All, LL.D., by the Rev. James Griffin. 8vo. Hamilton, Adams, and Co. 1839.

A Sermon occasioned by the Death of the Rev. R. S. M'All, LL.D. by the Rev. G. Barrow Kidd, Macclesfield. 8vo. Ward and Co. 1838.

We can scarcely tell whether to welcome or regret the publication of the volumes which we have placed at the head of the above list. We are not sure that we could have brought ourselves to introduce our friend to the public, in the form of permanent records, unless we could have presented him *as he was*. We cannot conceive of Phidias or of Raffaele consenting to be known by any description, aided only by the *accidental* figures hit off during his career; and we feel somewhat of the jealousy of the amicus juratissimus, which would have forbidden to all but the chosen few a sight of the unfinished statue or painting.

Besides, we know of no man of whom it might have been said with stricter truth—

“Crescit, occulto velut arbor ævo,
Fama Marcelli.”

Or rather, that he was rapidly becoming “*ἄνθρωπος πλήρης πίστεως καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου*”; “*τύπος τῶν πιστῶν ἐν λόγῳ, ἐν ἀναστροφῇ, ἐν ἀγάπῃ, ἐν πνεύματι, ἐν πίστει, ἐν ἀγνείᾳ.*” We could not have been content to *tell* this; we think we must have had those utterances of the heart—those living glowing incidents and speaking circumstances, which alone can put the stranger in place of the friend, and kindle those mysterious sympathies of the soul, which the most accurate and philosophical descriptions cannot awaken; or we must have forborne.

It is our full persuasion that, from the materials that were available, no man living could have produced a more complete and interesting memoir of Dr. M'All than our honoured friend, Dr. Wardlaw, has produced; and when we consider the small amount of information supplied to him, and his limited means of forming a personal judgment, we are surprised at his success in tracing

the mental portraiture of our lamented brother, and seizing on so many of the peculiar as well as obvious features of his moral man. Had it been determined to print a memoir for private circulation only, (and we could almost wish it had,) several individuals might have been found who would have put into it more of M'All's spirit, and written it with more of that inspiration which is so grateful and delicious to the heart that beats in warm attachment; but if it must be a life for the public, and which is to inform those that never saw him, of the skill and power of Him that fashioned his noble soul, and put it in that delicately constructed and wisely adapted frame, and brought both mind and body under the influence of grace and truth, making them the temple of the Holy Spirit, richly, variously, and magnificently adorning them, we must have the able physiologist as well as the faithful friend, and we thank the family for selecting Dr. Wardlaw; we thank the biographer for the generous promptitude with which he undertook, and for the masterly manner in which he has executed his task. It is vain to expect such a life as that of Doddridge, by Orton; the papers necessary to its production were sealed before they were bequeathed; indeed we are not sure that, like Doddridge, he continued to keep his diary. Nor can we look for such a collection of *reliquiæ pretiosæ*, as Boswell's Life of Johnson contains. M'All had no Boswell to secure his sayings, and we are sure that no man's memory could recall them; at least in his words; and *these* we must have to *have his* thoughts. This is evident, from the comparative failure of the few attempts that have been made, and that, too, by those persons who could have done it, if any could. Johnson's sayings were *hard thoughts*; the very dress of which a Boswell could not forget; M'All's were animated and warm, enkindling the soul of the auditor too much to allow him to stop to write them on his memory. *We can fancy* what he said, and how he said it, in several instances referred to in the memoir; but, with the escape of the exact phraseology, too much of the spirit has passed away to enable the *stranger* to see and hear the speaker himself.

Some then, perhaps many, may be disappointed with the memoir. Those that knew him as a lover and acquaintance, and have been admitted to his board and hearth; those that have been accustomed to meet him in the social circle, and there, where all was freedom and confidence, to look on his form and listen to his speech; those who have enjoyed his ministry, who have often sat down with him at the table of the Lord, and met him in that upper room, where prayer was wont to be made; those of his friends who have ever told him their sorrows, and asked his counsel and received it; who have ever entered with him, alone, into spiritual converse, or been taken by him to his oratory to bend the knee together; those of his people whom he has met at their own fireside, or visited in their chamber, pouring oil and wine into their bosom; and those of his brethren in the ministry who have communed with him of their griefs and joys, their failures and successes; the cross of Christ, the mercy of the gospel, the recompense of the wise and faithful servant; *these* will want more than could be furnished, and may be

heard to sigh over the absence of that which to them constituted his loveliness and worth, and gave to his person and character that singular and invincible power which he possessed over their affections not less than their esteem. *But it will not disappoint others*; it is rich in interest; it contains a faithful and masterly delineation of a rare and exalted character; above all, of a rare and exalted Christian and christian minister. So much goodness is seldom allied with so much greatness, and in the life they are seen in combination. The biographer has introduced a few episodes, which, perhaps, somewhat break the continuous interest which one likes to be maintained; but they are scarcely digressive, whilst they are of intrinsic value, and we could not consent to their erasure. A few similes, however, that of the hyæna to wit, (as well as that of the satellite and leviathan in Mr. James's oration,) are by no means to our taste; and some of the foot notes we think unnecessary. It would gratify us, moreover, if, in another edition, some details were given which, probably, from a feeling of delicacy, have been suppressed. The particulars of his leaving Macclesfield* certainly should be furnished; in that movement we are persuaded that high principle governed him. The very bare reference to the business that was pending, at the period when his strength began to fail, may give rise to some insinuation and surmises. Those who knew aught of it, however, are aware that all suspicions in the least degree dishonourable to him would be unjust; that any particular account would not be worth the letter-press and paper, whilst it would throw no new light on his character, and gratify only a meddling spirit. We do not think the same, however, of the suppressed conversation with the individual who drove him from Axminster, and should like it inserted. Whilst on the subject of omissions, we must request, now that our honoured friend Williams is no more, that the eulogy passed upon him in the course of the charge delivered to Mr. Royle, which, we understand, was as just as it was delicate, may be introduced in any future edition.

What shall we say of the Sermons? Do they represent M^r All? It is impossible they should. They are great productions, and passages occur in them of uncommon richness and strength; but they present the mind of the author in one phase only, and that, from the nature of sermons, as well as from the specialty of the occasions for which they were composed, by no means the most advantageous phase to show the genius of the author.

* There is considerable discrepancy in the dates occurring in pages 70, 79, 80, vol. i. It is said that "he accepted the appointment; viz. to the chaplaincy at Macclesfield, and his ordination there took place in the autumn of 1823. That St. George's Chapel, at Macclesfield, was opened in October, 1828, in which he laboured three years; and that he entered on his stated duties in Moseley Street, Manchester, in January, 1827." The facts, we believe, are these:—He settled at Macclesfield in 1815. St. George's was opened in 1823. He laboured there rather more than three years, and removed to Manchester in January, 1827. The period of two years from his leaving Edinburgh in 1813, to his settlement in 1815, are still to be accounted for; nor have we the means of ascertaining the date of his ordination; it did not, however, take place for some years after his entrance on his chaplaincy.

And as sermons they appear under disadvantages. They were not, like Robert Hall's, even written for the press—not ONE of them. Besides, we believe we are correct in affirming that the *whole* of the *set* writings of Dr. M'All, up to the period of his coming to Manchester, would not fill an octavo volume. He never practised composition; and these two volumes contain nearly all the productions of his pen, save his skeletons. Those who know from experience the necessity of careful and frequent writing and revision, to the formation of a perfect style, and are aware of the immense labour to which our great masters, Addison, Burke, Dugald Stewart, Brougham, &c. submitted, to secure the excellence they attained, must at once perceive that the capabilities of our author must be very imperfectly indicated by these, in many cases, *hastily written* discourses.

Again, Dr. W. seems to question the correctness of Mr. Robertson's statement, that sometimes his "extempore effusions, in richness, copiousness, and energy, surpassed his read sermons." Mem. p. 99. We are prepared, however, to confirm Mr. R.'s opinion, and deliberately to affirm, that we have heard from him spontaneous addresses, which, in every point of view, would sustain a comparison with any of the discourses found in these volumes, and that those who form their judgment of his powers from the latter alone, will have a very faint idea of the order of his mind. And it is easily accounted for. His biographer, in a beautiful passage, has furnished the explanation:

"His digressions . . . were sometimes, if I may so express myself, not lateral excursions on the same level, but flights upward. The suggestive thought, on which his mind laid hold, was one, we shall suppose, of an elevating character, leading heavenward, leading Godward. Then came the *moments of inspiration*: Thought succeeded thought, each surpassing that which preceded it in lofty grandeur; every fresh suggestion an additional plumage to his soaring pinion; his spirit kindling and expanding in its sublime ascent, and giving utterance as if he had 'the tongues of men and of angels' to 'thoughts that breathed' in 'words that burned,' till he seemed to reach the very 'throne of the Majesty on High,' and to be 'filled with all the fulness of God.'"—p. 105.

The fact is, that every word in the vocabulary was at his absolute command, and with it every shade of meaning came to his aid, whilst he was evoking it. When excited, the entire subject on which he was speaking was before his mind, perceived in all its minute and latent, not less than in its prominent features, with the clearness of intuition; you might almost see the movements of his spirit; his gleaming eye and ethereal countenance told you of the fixedness, the intentness, the familiarity with which he was gazing on objects you saw not, and indicated the brightness and vividness of that light in which he alone beheld them. If he spake of the cross of Christ, or of the nature and worth of the soul; if he would describe the inward conflicts of the believer, or reveal the mysterious workings of his own mind in relation to his office; if he were led to dwell on the hopes and prospects of the church, or to describe the glories of the heavenly state, he seemed to be giving utterance to conceptions as distinctly realized and as fully substantiated by him as are those

of the philosopher, who, with the aid of the microscope, is made to see the structure of the most delicate objects of the material universe, without losing aught of the impressions of that vastness and grandeur which are revealed by the mightier instrument of the astronomer. His extempore discourses, too, were frequently pervaded by a peculiar unction, an unction from the Holy One, which extended itself beyond his tone and manner, (which it might have affected equally, had his address been precomposed,) to his words and metaphors, suggesting the most appropriate and beautiful which the language could supply. The sympathy thus awakened was often intense, and the effect indescribable, on those who listened to what was then, in the highest sense, holy eloquence. Such a man then could speak, at times, better than he could write. In his study the stimulus to eloquence was wanting. Whilst speaking, he uttered *what he saw*; it was then before him, invisible to all but himself, but in close and intimate contact with his own mind, which never tired of holding its visions; they necessarily vanished, however, or lost their brightness, when he had to select his thoughts for paper and choose their dress. The first mechanical act was the natural and easy and proximate channel, by which the mind sought to discharge the current, and disburden itself of its crowding thoughts and images; the second disenchanted the scene, and cut off the communication. It is impossible to describe the sweetness, the pathos, the grace, with which he would express what was tender, and say "adieu," or the concentrated power and masculine energy with which he would give utterance to the grand or sublime. If he was sometimes "discursive and copious," yet, when compelled to a "brief and hurried close" of a sermon or address, he could be as nervous and vehement as Demosthenes himself; as sententious and austere as the warmest admirer of Tacitus or Sallust could desire. There was no kind of speaking of which sometimes, in one oration, he did not show himself master—the humorous, the satirical, the argumentative, the brilliant, the didactic, the impassioned, the beautiful, the sublime; and those who have heard him on every kind of subject, passing from the one to the other with the utmost ease and naturalness, cannot say in which he excelled. Now all this, the Discourses do not—*could not* give, and therefore we have not M'All. We have sometimes laid the volumes down, wishing they had not appeared, but we have again opened and read them with the deepest interest, and rejoiced at their publication. On the whole, *we must hail them as a treasure*, and warmly recommend them to the perusal and re-perusal of our friends, admonishing them, however, of the principle suggested by the admirable biographer, and that, "ex ungue," they must judge "leonem."

Dr. M'All is said to have borne, "in person, temperament, and mind, a very considerable likeness to the late Dr. Thomas Brown."—p. 88. We think, however, that between our friend and Lord Brougham, though in mind alone, there was a still greater similarity. He was like that eminent philosopher in the power of nice discrimination and perceptivity, in opulence of imagination, and in delicately benevolent

moral sensibility: but between him and the noble and learned lord the points of resemblance were numerous and exact, those of dissimilarity few and accidental; the most remarkable resulting from the opposite influences under which they lived and moved. We should like to see an analysis of the two minds from the pen of some competent physiologist; it must, however, be one who knew how to estimate the forces which acted on each. Every feature should be illustrated by passages from their writings. It is true we want M'Alf's speeches, to render the comparison perfect; but if the author of the Sketch in the Sheffield Iris would undertake the task, his surprising memory, perhaps, with the aid of existing reports and notes, might enable him to recover enough for *that* purpose. If we mistake not, such a document would be hailed with satisfaction by the public.

If in early life the mind of Lord Brougham had been subjected to the operation of divine truth, and educated for the ministry of the gospel; or if M'Alf had spent his days at the bar, and his nights within the walls of St. Stephen's; if the worldly ambition of the one had been checked by the higher and holier desire of winning souls; or if that of the other had been stimulated by the hope of gaining the highest honours which a British senator can secure—the likeness, we are persuaded, would have been so exact, that the chief discernible difference would have consisted in the superior elegance of person, taste, and mental mien, which must have attached to our departed friend.

The same surprising versatility of talent distinguished each; the same remarkable powers of comprehension and acquisition. In each, as Mr. Griffin, in his admirable sketch, has said, of one "perceptivity or apprehensiveness was exquisitely keen, instantly and perpetually active, and all but illimitably penetrating . . . it was a perspicacity that looked like intuition;" (p. 39,) whilst the suggestive faculty was so strong, that either of them, on getting merely the clue to a writer's argument, or the scent of his track, might have composed his book, adding to it freely from his own stores, and "following out facts and ideas to applications and uses new even to the author." In each, every mental power was great and commanding; each could hold subject to his own volition the whole of his mental treasures, and use them at pleasure; each could abstract himself from all around, retire into the region of thought, and, as long as he chose, continue his revels, and then, with like felicity and copiousness, return to tell us what he had seen and handled. That the one should have been thoroughly versant in all departments of theology, as the other is in every branch of law, might be expected; but what astonished men profoundly learned in science, literature, &c. was (to apply again the language of Mr. G.) "that they could not touch on any of their peculiar professions, or employments, or subjects of inquiry," but either of them "displayed as much acquaintance with each respectively, as if that one had been the sole study of his life." (p. 41.) Was M'Alf's an incessantly active spirit of observation and inquiry? so is Brougham's.

Did M^cAll delight to grapple with difficulties, and choose for solution those problems that promised to task his vigorous powers? so does Brougham. And is it true of M^cAll, that

"He could pass, by the most rapid transitions, from subject to subject; and that whether he spake of the most ordinary or the most abstruse, there was a rapidity of conception, an originality and a diversity of thought, and a varied appropriateness of diction, elegant without ostentation, familiar without meanness, and every word and phrase the best that could be chosen, without the appearance of selection—such as astonished strangers, and gave ever-fresh delight to familiar friends; that there was the sparkling of wit, the playfulness of humour, and the happy hits of innocuous raillery, and the gravity of serious reflection, and the pathos of exquisite sensibility, and the vivacity of graphic anecdote, and the eloquence of picturesque description, and the accuracy and clearness of scientific statement, and the lofty flights of fancy, and the quick and penetrating pursuit, apprehension, and hair-splitting dissection of some abstract nicety of metaphysics, all blending in rapid and returning succession, according as the different members of the social coterie might purposely or accidentally supply the varied impulse?" (Mem. p. 82.)

such, with slight modifications, may be affirmed of Brougham.

And in those features in which they differed, there were affinities. Some of those differences were original, some accidental. M^cAll's material frame, the casket in which the jewel was lodged, was, of the two, the more delicately adjusted and the more beautifully fragile; the depository of Brougham's is more firm, compact, and muscular; but both betrayed strong nervous susceptibilities, and both were remarkably free (for of the single tendency imputed to Lord Brougham we are total sceptics) from sensual passions. The mind of the latter manifests less compass than did that of our friend; we think it *has* less; but we say *manifests*, because it is impossible to determine how far the difference arose from the influence of the different topics of thought to which each devoted his life. We do not, however, recollect hearing from Brougham any of those *fine* and *delicate* strokes of pathos, on the one hand, which frequently occurred in the speeches of M^cAll, nor, on the other, those outbreaks of *sublimest* eloquence, as if the soul had passed out of the region of material existences, and stood before us, not only as the personation of truth, but set on fire by it, kindling, at the same time, the sympathies of every hearer, awakening brighter or more shadowy perceptions of new and unimagined trains of thought, and inspiring him with a momentary consciousness of latent capabilities never before entertained. The peroration of the speech on slavery delivered by Henry Brougham at York or Leeds, we forget which, comes the nearest to what we mean. *His* power, we think, arises principally from the singular strength and truthfulness of his conceptions, put into language as singularly appropriate and forcible; but he wants the fine moral enthusiasm which rendered Chatham and Wilberforce—both his inferiors in mental power—at times more sublime and impressive, and which, we think, gave to M^cAll a lofty grandeur which Brougham does not reach.

Even in style there are points both of difference and of striking similarity. That of the senator has been formed with care, by the frequent and long-continued study of the great masters of antiquity,

by actual writing and revision, together with a designed conformity to the Greek orators. The preacher's, however, was rather according to Roman example, and, as we have said, was never perfected by writing. The one, therefore, is racy, caustic, nervous, terrible; the other, with its great strength, has more of copiousness, and with equal precision, more of melody and rhythm, whilst it is less thoroughly English. At the same time, who that has ever heard M'All, when he has been putting a subject "in different lights, unfolding all its imaginable relations, and reducing it to its elements . . . never losing himself for an instant in the mazes into which he had voluntarily wandered, but easily returning to this or that particular step of the process or apposite illustration, when it suited his purpose," (Mem. p. 88,) has not been reminded of Brougham? Or who that has read one of the vehement addresses of the thunderer, or of the happy sarcastic speeches of him whose "tongue cannot gloze," has not been interrupted by the thought—these are the *very words and thoughts, parentheses and involutions*, which M'All, in the same circumstances, would have employed?

But the chief difference arose, undoubtedly, from the moral causes by which they were respectively acted upon. We would not wrong his lordship, but it appears to us that the chief moral influences by which his character has been moulded, have been supplied by the pages of Seneca, Epictetus, &c. refined and exalted by the preceptive portions of the New Testament. To these he has undoubtedly given much attention, and aimed, we believe, to conform himself. We are not, we confess, of the number of those who can for a moment suppose him to have been all his days a deceiver, or who, in consequence of a few delinquencies, can venture on the supposition that his public life has been a lie. To put down, as some unceremoniously have put down, all that he has said and done in the cause of humanity and goodness for nearly forty years, either to hypocrisy or mere ambition, requires suppositions far too monstrous for our philosophy. He must a thousand times have betrayed his wickedness and vileness. Besides, it would be gratuitously to libel human nature. Were all that is alleged against him true, (one part in ten, however, of which, hath not been proven,) it might be accounted for otherwise. He has adopted a *defective moral system*, and that system is insufficient to subdue and keep in check passions like his. It has done much for him, undoubtedly: and in his attachment and subjection to it we believe him to be sincere; but he is undoubtedly ambitious, whilst he lives and moves amidst great temptations; but if redeemed and holy men are sometimes snared and taken, is it to be wondered at, that where evangelical motives and principles are *wanting*, there should be such occasional, and even serious departures from rectitude as are charged, though we know not with what truth, on him? M'All, however, had seen the cross, had felt its power, and knew the meaning of that passage, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your bodies and spirit which are his." There was as much, perhaps, in him as in the former to suppress and to destroy; nor was it without encountering much stubborn resistance that the gospel secured over

him its power; but it *did* secure it. The love of Christ went to his heart, reached his spirit and temper, and became to his mind the all but ever-present principle, the all but ever-constraining motive of action, and, if we are correct in our estimate of his natural character, especially of his stern, frigid, and obstinate mental tendencies, accomplished more for him than for any man we know. To his native kindness and benevolence it gave the fixedness of a deep religious principle, and imparted a peculiar grace. It taught him to love and honour, where he would otherwise have hated and despised; to forgive, where otherwise he would have been implacable; whilst it enabled him to bear, if not without anguish of mind, without either the feeling or the expression of resentment, what he would otherwise have scornfully rebuked, or, in a tempest of furious and indignant passion, made to recoil in tenfold force on the head of the offender. It checked ambition; against vanity and pride it brought a healthful antagonist power to act; so that, if its manifestations could not at all times be repressed, they were seen associated with deep contrition and self-abasement, with increasing meekness and lowliness, gradually, but surely, producing in him the same mind which was also in Christ Jesus. But we must not pursue the subject; yet we cannot pass from it without requesting the reader to study the history of the two remarkable men who have been the subject of our comparison and contrast, and to mark the infinite superiority of the gospel of Jesus Christ to every system which man can devise. Only suppose the statesman to have yielded to its power, and there seems no limit to the benefit he might have conferred on the world; only suppose the preacher to have been destitute of its grace, and how feeble the charm of his character, how transient the glory of his life!

We must pass on to that period in the history of Dr. M'All, which, though in a high degree trying and afflictive, we regard as having been made by him that ruleth over all, to contribute, in the largest measure, to the happy development and stability of his religious character—the period which he spent at Edinburgh. We cannot but confess our surprise at the difficulty felt by his biographer in reconciling the various accounts of his states of mind, and determining the amount and causes of his alleged scepticism. We do not think it correct to designate him a *speculatist*, though he applied to himself the term. He did speculate: but the tendency was quite as much induced as it was natural. The real cause, we feel quite sure, was THE TREATMENT HE HAD RECEIVED—treatment we will not venture to characterize, and on which we cannot reflect without grief and shame. Neither Mr. Brotherston nor Dr. Wardlaw, though each has noticed it, has at all appreciated the influence it had, and could not but have, upon his mind. His expulsion from Axminster, at the dictum of one man, not only reflects indelible disgrace on that man himself, but much discredit on all who in any way consented to it; nor could we ever learn that there was aught in his creed that rendered even expedient, his exclusion from Hoxton. It is painful to us to be obliged to state, that we have known more than one, possessed not only of great talents, but sterling piety, who has

been lost to the church or seriously injured, through the want of wisdom or forbearance on the part of those whose office it was to guide and direct. There might be eccentricities of character, or even faults; but are there not several individuals, now the boast of Christendom, whose early career was similarly marked? We fear that both tutors and committees are too apt to regard the relation in which students stand to them, as that of subjects to rulers only, instead of younger brethren in Christ Jesus; and when the former, especially in a theological seminary, know no method of maintaining their authority but by the rod and air of the school-master, the effect must be greatly mischievous. We are firmly persuaded, that if, in several instances, the paternal had been blended with the magisterial character—if there had been more of the spirit of the apostle, who comforted and charged the young disciples, as a father his children—and if, when the persuasions and tears of professors failed, and it became necessary to appeal to a committee, the accused could have gone into their presence with a feeling of confidence, instead of suspicion or dread, assured of witnessing in each of those about to sit in judgment, the temper *uniformly displayed on such occasions* by our departed friend—compelling respect, if not affection, whilst giving utterance to the most faithful rebuke or severest sentence, we are firmly persuaded that *he* would have been spared much of the torment and peril of the most trying period of his history; and that others, who are either in their grave or pursuing some secular calling, would now have been adorning the gospel ministry. We rejoice to know that a great improvement has taken place, and that, at the present moment, so many of our professional chairs are filled by men who possess what we think to have been the qualifications that met in him, that presided in Carmel, at the most flourishing period of the school of the prophets.

The second disappointment of young M'All's hopes left a wound in his heart, which, though ultimately healed, distinctly showed its marks to the close of life. It well nigh proved fatal: he was saved from utterly falling, only by the mighty power of God. The soft and tender hand of his friend Dr. Collyer, whose name, in this connexion, we cannot mention but with filial reverence, could not reach *this* sore. The immediate symptoms were such, (and no one who knows any thing of human nature—certainly no one acquainted with *his* mental conformation—will be surprised at it) that the result could not be predicated. The latent irritation was still more dangerous; and it is one of those cases which constrains us to give all the glory to God. A deep sense of injury—of injury, too, received, not at the hands of a few indiscriminating and irresponsible individuals, but of the recognised leaders in Israel—injury which *he* thought undeserved, and which clouded his prospects for ever—was lodged in his mind. To his view that injury was doubtless exaggerated; he could not be expected to form a strictly sober judgment of the case, and he left Hoxton necessarily fretted and mortified in a high degree. Great additional bitterness and irritation, perhaps, were given to his spirit, by an impression that he was the victim of a feeble and contemptible jealousy. The fact that the occasion of

his expulsion was the alleged defence of heterodox doctrine, would of itself be sufficient to give a direction to his subsequent speculation; and it is easy to see how, in such a state of wounded feeling, he might *wish* to find false the religious creed of those who were supposed to have treated him with so much ignorant severity, and true, the opinions which he indeed believed not, but which he fancied he saw *they* could not subvert; and how, by a process similar in its operation, though different in its circumstances, to that through which the Psalmist passed, he was brought into the state in which "his feet were almost gone, and his steps had well nigh slipped."

As to his having been shaken in mind on the subject of the christian evidences, we cannot, with all respect for Mr. Brotherston's testimony, believe a word of it. Assuredly, Mr. B. greatly mistook him. That there were moments in his young friend's history, when the infidel arguments appeared to possess greater weight than at others, may be admitted; but most men have had their days and weeks of vacillation and of darkness, and especially in the season of adversity. It might be at such a season that the conversations alluded to took place; and the young disputant, in a mood which many can understand who never *really* questioned the truth of the Bible history, and, without at all "arguing for argument's sake," might press them on his friend so closely, as to induce the suspicion that he was in danger on that score. And we are the rather inclined to this opinion, because we can find no evidence that M'All ever unbosomed himself to Mr. Brotherston, or made him his religious confidante. He appears to have conversed with him as a senior friend, whose character he highly esteemed, and for whose kindness he was grateful. Indeed, we have reason to think, that from the period when he permitted his parents to inspect his diary, till *within a few years* prior to his decease, he suffered no man, not even Collyer, or Raffles, or Fletcher, to *know* the *secrets* of his soul. To his scepticism, then, on the evidences of *Christianity*, as far as it went, we infer, that he was *driven* or tempted by a troubled mind, if peradventure he might find some relief, and that it was *never seriously* entertained.

Nor are we sure that he was at any time so far gone in doctrinal error as his biographer seems to admit. The same causes *chiefly* operated here also in producing the deflection that did take place. In the trial to which he was subjected, his *trust* and *submission* were *undoubtedly shaken*, and so far shaken as to lead him to speculate freely. Certain ties were snapped; he imagined himself at liberty to canvas afresh every disputed point, and he launched forth, angrily, perhaps, if not recklessly, into the deep. But time only, (we speak after the manner of men) time only was wanting to right his mind, by soothing the wounded spirit. The grace of God was in him. There never was a period when he did not feel and acknowledge that the negations of Socinus would not do for guilty man; though there was a season through which, for wise and important ends, as the issue proved, though then mysterious, he was suffered to be tossed to and fro; but the cable was not cut, nor the moorings loosed, and, as the storm subsided, he found that his hope,

which he had as an anchor of the soul, and which entereth within the veil, was returning, and he was still safe beside the cross.

But how came it to pass that his speculation took this precise turn? Was there nothing in the state of his mind, prior to the troubles which depressed his faith, which may account for it? We have reasons for saying that there was, and that the *tritheistic* aspect of several of the prevailing formularies of Christendom, had arrested his attention, and suggested to his mind, as it has to others, many grave inquiries. The difficulty presented on this subject by the Athanasian Creed, is very candidly and fairly stated, by the Oxford Tract writers, to consist in the details and nice distinctions, not to be found in Scripture, which are made in that formulary. The reply of those writers to that objection, however, miserably disappointed us, and, had we needed it, would have afforded us no relief. We as firmly believe in the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ as in his humanity, and we hold Sabellianism as abhorrent as Tritheism; but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact, that no such formula as "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost," is found in the Bible. We deprecate the addition as a gratuitous encouragement of heresy, and as affording, to an evil heart of unbelief, positive materials to its scepticism, whilst we feel assured, that if the phrase that is really scriptural, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is not sufficient to guard the triunity of the Godhead, the explanations of man will never accomplish it. But it is; and we become increasingly confirmed in opinion, that it is because the doctrine is otherwise presented (connected, we should add, with that of the eternal generation of the Son,) in the only confessions of faith which are brought under the notice of educated men, that Socinianism is still alive in this country. We have said that the mind of our friend was stirred up to inquiry. We believe, however, that his perplexity would soon have terminated, but for his sore disappointment. It protracted the struggle, and greatly increased the danger. Through the mercy of God he recovered at once the rectitude of doctrine* and the strength of faith, which, notwithstanding some unjust, if not jealous surmises, noticed by his biographer, he retained, with singular steadfastness and clearness, to the close of life.

The religious character of our friend was not less marked and interesting than his mental. He was truly a man of God. His mind, though singularly bold and independent, was at the same time naturally disposed to what is ancient and venerable. Whilst, therefore, in some of its moods, it could resist all authority and power, in others it bowed down in profoundest adoration. As a Brahmin, he would probably have been a devotee; as a Catholic, a monachist of the strictest and purest order. But he was a Christian and a Protestant; he was, moreover, a dissenter, and his congregationalism was the result of careful inquiry; it did not descend to him from his fathers; strong conviction of its scriptural authority only, attached him to it. The altar and the crucifix, the vaulted aisle and

* It is but right to state, that Dr. M'All was ultimately inclined to adopt, though not without some misgiving, the eternal generation scheme.

dim religious light would have been more congenial with his natural taste; and had he been an episcopalian, he might have been a pietist; there were elements in his character which, we can easily conceive, would, in certain circumstances, have led him to sympathize with the Froudes, and Newmans, and Puseys of the day; not in their doctrinal contradiction and absurdities, we know, but in the peculiar tone of their devotions, their seemingly refined sanctity of mind, their austere and rigid holiness. But he was better instructed, and possessing, in a remarkable degree, the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind; those features of character, which in them are so imposing, even associated with error, in *him* lent all their charms to truth, and rendered his piety at once manly, and dignified, and lovely. There was freedom, but it was allied with the profoundest submission; there was great purity and spirituality of mind, with no tincture of asceticism; there was the firmest adherence to truth, associated with the largest charity and the tenderest compassion for error; there was much, *very much*, of the mind of Christ.

About seven or eight years before his death, a great and visible advancement in personal religion began. Previously strong in faith, and eminent in godliness; now, his rapid progress could not escape observation. His spirit was greatly mellowed; the deep wounds inflicted in early life began to close; whatever was unseemly and repulsive, gave place to the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and the heavenly mind took the place of the earthly. Several circumstances concurred, instrumentally, in producing this change; the important station which he found himself occupying in Lancashire and at Manchester; the death of that "greatly good" man, Mr. Roby; the feeble state of health of his only two children; the accounts of revivals of religion which reached him from various places, were amongst the number. But these were only the means employed by the Great Agent. The Spirit was poured out upon him from on high; and to have produced such a change in the circumstances in which he was placed, large measures of his influences must have descended upon him. Mr. Griffin says, "I know and should deem it wrong not to say, that Dr. M'All was naturally of the aspiring and ambitious order of minds." (p. 44.) Mr. Fletcher's statement is, that his "disposition was naturally lofty and proud. He felt the consciousness of his superior powers . . . and he was not the man to be satisfied if they were not in some measure appreciated. . . . This, indeed, may be regarded as his chief failing." (p. 150.) Whilst his biographer admits that his "bosom was the seat of a somewhat unduly proud and touchy sense of honour." We feel even less inclination than they to conceal or excuse his fault. We scarcely know what to call it; it was not haughtiness nor pride. Vanity would best express it, if we could divest the term of all that is mean and vulgar; for not only was the tendency of which we speak altogether free from such qualities, it was singularly, if not contradictorily, allied with an unusual and even magnanimous generosity of spirit. Vanity, then, thus explained, was, we think, undoubtedly the type which the great moral malady

of our nature assumed in him, occasioning at times to himself serious inconvenience, to his friends much pain.

Now, in the position which he occupied, there was every thing to feed this disposition. At the head of the circle in which he moved, in learning, in eloquence, in conversational powers, he was also the idol of the people of his charge. The homage and adulation they rendered him were sufficient to seduce and corrupt an angel mind: but he withstood its influence, and at the very time that their incense was most freely offered, he was growing most in humility and grace. Along with his striking advance in piety, his brotherly kindness and charity became so evident, as entirely to obliterate from the minds of his brethren the effects of what Mr. Fletcher calls his former "haughty reserve;" and notwithstanding the frequently disparaging comparisons and offensive eulogies they were sometimes compelled to hear from the lips of admirers, the strongest confidence and affection towards him sprang up in their breasts. We know of no position more likely than his to excite the envy of others, yet he escaped or outlived it altogether; we know of none more likely to induce self-complacency and vain-glory; and where the native tendencies of the mind are favourable to the growth of these passions, how rare, even amongst good men, is the conquest; yet in his case the conquest was made, and this plague of the heart subdued, and the opposite virtues, to a large extent, superinduced. "Oh!" he has again and again repeated to me, says Mr. Griffin, (and others have heard it,) with an emotion of almost distress, "I care nothing what people may think or say of my abilities, if I may be useful to souls;" and once, with a kind of swelling indignation, "God knows, I do not want their applause, I want their salvation." Who can fail to recognize here the great power of the Spirit? who can help magnifying the grace of God in him?

Of Noah, it is said, he was "a righteous man;" of Nathaniel, that he was "an Israelite indeed without guile;" Stephen was "full of faith and of power;" Simeon was "just and devout;" and Barnabas "a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." Were we to characterize M'All's piety, we should say he was *devout* and *pure*. His chosen religious exercise was meditation. He communed much with God in thought, and he came forth from Peniel, or rather from the mercy seat of the New Covenant, to exhibit a character which stood, to quote again from Mr. Griffin, "in the very sunlight of heaven; and which, before human eyes, was without the shadow of a spot."

To that feature of his ministerial character, however, just alluded to, his anxiety to do good to souls; and the humiliation and distress of mind occasioned to him by what he thought the failure of his ministry, we must further advert. To this solicitude his biographers have referred; and this *travail* of his soul we also have had opportunities of knowing, and have heard its agonizing expression. We were favoured with a few hours confidential intercourse with him, at the commencement of the last year of his life, and never shall we forget the impression produced upon our mind by the lowly meekness of his spirit; by his "pantings of unutterable desire for the

salvation of souls;" by the strong solicitude with which he contemplated the effect of his labours, and the issues of his ministry, and by the deep groanings which at times escaped him as he spake. The cause of his sorrow was this, that, comparatively so few were known to him to be converted to God by his instrumentality. Our heart was nigh to bursting, nor would our emotions suffer us to reply as he appealed to us, in the most earnest and solemn manner, "Tell me, you have had opportunities of forming a judgment, and I know I can confide in your friendship, tell me is there any thing you have observed in me, or in my preaching, which appears to you, in any way to account for this failure? I entreat you, tell me." The solution of the case given by his biographer, nearly agrees with the answer we returned. We are persuaded he was mistaken. Though his style of address was not adapted to produce *the kind of effect*, which is seen to be followed by the most striking instances of conversion; and to bring about those sudden and instantaneous revolutions in individual minds, produced by the appeals of such men as Knox or Whitefield of former days; or as Raffles, Parsons, Leifchild, Newton, and several others of the present; yet the cases of direct, though *more gradually* developed change, wrought by his ministrations, were far more numerous than he was aware. The order of emotion awakened by the two modes of address is so different, that we can scarcely venture an opinion of the causes of the difference. Perhaps, however, *their* power arises chiefly from addressing to the *more obvious* principles of our nature, forcible exhibitions of *the more obvious* truths of religion; while *his* sprang from dealing so skilfully with elements and susceptibilities of equal importance in the mental constitution, but of more delicate and subtle character; and which, when reached, as they but rarely are, are attended with emotions of far deeper, though less turbulent, excitement. We think we can recollect many occasions, when, whilst listening to some of *them*, if we had never previously known fear or godly sorrow, we should have been brought by *their* appeals, to the first acts of repentance. Under *his* addresses our mind has been as strongly wrought upon, and impressions as good and holy awakened; yet this was not the precise effect. We do not remember to have been *bowed down* by their eloquence, as by his. *They* stirred us up, but when he spake we were made dumb with silence. *They* would have excited in us a restless anxiety and fear, which would have led us to act as did the Philippian jailer, and induced us to seek the first possible interview with them, to tell the tale of our guilt and unbelief, and seek direction. His expostulations were attended with a solemn awe, like that which pervaded the Israelites at the foot of Horeb, which inclined us to seek the solitude of the closet, and to ponder seriously the state of our own hearts, whilst their full effect would be seen, only after many days. That effect, however, on the whole, was quite as powerful in its direct operation, if not so palpable; and exerted an influence on the character as extended and permanent. Through their ministry, numberless conversions have been effected, at once, and are known to have taken place; through his, as many, it may be, have resulted,

but by a series of operations, to no one of which they could be distinctly traced by human eye or human consciousness; and are therefore hidden from our knowledge, till the revelation of the great day.

At the same time, we do not think that it was for the rise and fall of many in Israel that he was set; it was chiefly, perhaps, for other purposes, though of equal moment and equal honour. Indirectly, as well as directly, his life and labours have been made to produce an amount of good on the entire christian ministry of the country, on the church, and on the world, which we cannot estimate, which is felt through all the ramifications of society, which will be transmitted to remote posterity, and with which the numerous isolated conversions of others cannot compare. The other kind of good, however, because more visible and ascertainable, is usually esteemed a more direct testimony of divine approval, is naturally more desired by us, and when withheld, is to the devoted minister of Jesus Christ a trial of faith which occasions serious inquiry and great searching of heart. It was so to him, and we believe it was that *sword of keenest edge*, that wore out the scabbard. Respecting the paltry "business of a harassing nature," (the details of which, his esteemed biographer has passed over; whether wisely or not, we do not presume to say,) Mr. Robertson observes "that it was such as probably would not have much disturbed one of a tranquil temperament, but certain to overthrow the equanimity of my too sensitive friend." He should have added, however, that it was the previously shattered state of his nerves which rendered him thus susceptible; and that had he been in ordinary health, no mischief beyond a moment's vexation could have arisen. But the vital energy was already gone. The zeal of the Lord's house, had already consumed him. Week by week was he anxiously looking for inquirers, and agonizing in prayer for the manifestation of the Spirit's presence among his people. Day by day was his mind intent on subjects of discourse, and conversant with the love of Christ, or the terrors of the Lord, if he might but draw or drive his hearers to the cross. With intense desire he studied every case, and searched every heart, exploring the causes of unbelief: and with equally intense ingenuity and thought, aimed to adapt to that case and that heart his appeals. No man knows the amount of mental labour he thus expended. He heard of conversions effected by instrumentality which he could not but know was far feebler than his own; and he could not be satisfied with referring his supposed failure to the sovereignty of divine grace. It was not enough to tell him that God sometimes chooses the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; because, though true, it is no *rule or law* of his procedure. He has frequently selected the greatest men, as Moses, Solomon, Stephen, Paul, Luther, Knox, to accomplish his greatest works; and the fear, the corroding fear, followed him perpetually, that in his case and in *him* some special reason hitherto undetected might exist, which prevented those copious effusions of the Spirit, which he so ardently desired. It is true the apprehension was to himself GREATLY sanctified; and though it might be somewhat morbid, largely contributed to his meekness

for death. But *there it was*, constantly preying on his mind. Every week, as the Sabbath drew on, and the time of preparation for its duties approached, it acquired fresh strength; and by its periodic and frequent recurrence in a subject so strangely susceptible, did more, we are persuaded, than all other causes to wear out his bodily frame, and to prematurely remove him from the toils of earth to the repose of heaven.

There is an interest about the closing scene of his life, unusually touching. We have not met with an individual, old or young, stern of heart or tender, stranger or friend, who could read the narrative with a tearless eye. We have again and again perused Raffles's, Griffin's, Wardlaw's; we have charged ourselves with weakness and endeavoured to conquer it, yet could not refrain from weeping. Surprise may have something to do with this effect. It is very rare to meet with so much true simplicity of faith and docility of spirit as are seen in him; but to find it in a mind of his order, is less common still. Wherever it exists it interests; but when found in combination with certain mental attributes and moral propensities, it astonishes as well as gratifies. Those who saw M^r All only at a distance, and conceived of him principally as great and haughty, not less than those who enjoyed his friendship and knew his defects, are subdued and overwhelmed, the one by the discovery, the other by the expression of his deep humility, his simple and undeviating trust, his calm, but clear and unclouded assurance of eternal life. We must limit ourselves to a few extracts bearing on the spirit of his religion.

"The illness of his only daughter, to whom he was tenderly attached, was coincident with his own. On being informed, a few days prior to her decease, that she was 'getting rapidly weaker,' he seemed surprised and shocked; . . . but said, 'she is in the hands of her merciful Lord, and there I desire to leave her.' Soon after the intelligence of her departure was communicated, he calmly said, 'If a word of mine were sufficient to call her back again, that word I would not utter if I might.' Describing to a friend the closing scene of her life, he added, 'Dear girl, she had to pass indeed through a dark valley, but there were bright, bright prospects at the end of it; no hallucinations, but bright prospects.'

"Often amidst that distressing restlessness which attended his complaint, he entreated that patience might be afforded to him; and often, when unable to obtain a moment's rest, he would pray and request his friends to pray, that he might have power to recline, or to sleep, or to breathe, as his wants at the time might dictate; remarking, that he thought it not sinful to pray for so small a mercy as power to recline without restlessness. Once, about that time, he quoted the passage 'I will make all his bed in his sickness,' and added, 'What infinite condescension to promise, *'I will make his bed!'* How beautiful! Who but one situated as I am, can tell the sweetness and importance of a bed prepared with care.'

"He had a keen relish for the beauties of nature; . . . sitting in the garden on one occasion, he was presented with a piece of sweet-briar, when he said, 'Did you ever see any sweet-briar hedges, growing in the country lanes? I have often risen in the morning very early, and walked for hours to enjoy their fragrance, which, when the dew is upon the leaves, is particularly fine.' He then quoted an exquisite passage from Milton's *L'Allegro*, and passing from this, in language too beautiful to be remembered, he expatiated at considerable length on the glory of the heavenly state, the variety of its engagements, and the perfect harmony that pervades the whole. He was powerfully excited, and the little

group that had gathered round him were melted into tears; they were reminded of some of his happiest closing addresses from the pulpit, when there seemed to be something angelic in the tone of his feeling, and almost in his very form.

"To his dear wife, he said on one occasion, 'Sarah, if I die this night, remember I die in perfect peace with all mankind, and in the sure and certain hope of a blessed immortality.'

"Once, as he lay with closed eyes, apparently asleep, he suddenly lifted up his hands and eyes, and exclaimed,

'A guilty helpless am I!
Yet Jesus died for me.'

"'Death,' says Dr. Raffles, who in company with his friend Mr. James, visited him the day before his decease, 'death was in his countenance; but never shall I forget the affection of his looks as he gazed upon me, or the warmth of his embrace, when he pressed me to his bosom! nor will it be possible for lapse of time to obliterate from the memory of either of us, the touching and impressive things he uttered. 'O,' said he, 'my dear brethren, O that I could give expression to some of the sentiments and thoughts which at this moment fill my heart, even to bursting!' and after a pause he added, 'You see in me such an utter negation of all goodness, that I do not suppose it could be surpassed, even if the universe were burnt up to its last fragment, its last cinder; and yet if the great and glorious God has condescended to make such a feeble, worthless creature as I am, in any measure an instrument in the promotion of his glory, O what a wonder, what a miracle!'

"'It will not do for us,' said his medical attendant, 'to have many such nights as the last, if a remedy can be thought of; you are indeed sadly exhausted and broken down this morning.' 'Yes,' he exclaimed with emphasis, 'I AM—broken in pieces like a potsherd; but I am a potsherd that has ceased to strive with its Maker.'

"Turning to one of his young friends . . . to whom he was much attached . . . he said with great earnestness 'Promise me, promise me, that you will meet me at the last day, with an unclouded brow. Look me in the eye,' he said, 'and promise me; nor would he rest satisfied till he had received an unequivocal reply.'

One extract more from his last conversation with his friend, Mr. Fletcher, must suffice.

"It was at a time when he was appallingly 'death-struck' and oppressed;—as Mr. F. entered the room, he lifted up his eyes and stretched out his hands to him, saying, 'Ah, Richard Fletcher, my faithful friend,' and embraced him, 'My outward man you perceive is decaying day by day.' 'Yes,' Mr. F. replied, 'but I hope the inward man is daily renewed.' 'I trust it is,' he answered. As well as he could, he expressed a wish that he should bear some message to his brethren the ministers. . . . 'What,' replied Mr. F. 'shall I say to them? all that is affectionate?' 'Yes,' said he, 'and grateful.' He asked him if the gospel he had preached to others now occupied his thoughts, and was dear to his heart? 'Yes,' said he, with a smile, 'ITS VERY CORE; I cannot now trouble myself with the envelopements.' Mr. F. observed, that he trusted he felt his soul safe, securely resting on the true foundation. He answered, 'Aye, on oaths, and promises, and blood.' . . . As far as his broken heart and flowing tears would allow, Mr. F. prayed with him, and when he closed, the Doctor said, solemnly and slowly, 'Amen—Amen—Amen;' and, after a short pause, again 'Amen.'

"This morning,' (in Mr. Robertson's memorandum) "July 27th, 1838, my revered friend died at half past two o'clock; so calmly departing, that those about him failed to notice the precise moment when the change took place."

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

This biography most impressively teaches one lesson of very high importance to every minister of Jesus Christ, to all the sons of the prophets. It is this—that the utmost diligence in study, the largest amount of preparation for what is perfunctory in our office, is not incompatible with the highest attainments in personal piety. In the cultivation of our mental faculties, in our literary, scientific, and theological acquirements, who is not compelled to retreat before him? But did he not also as far outstrip us in the christian race? He did not forsake the oratory for the study, nor need we. His communion with God was intimate, frequent, protracted. If it is neglected by us, it matters little how active we may be in public life, what amount of information we may possess, or how carefully we may study and elaborate our discourses. These things will prove no substitute for the spirit of prayer and of faith; they will form no compensation for the loss of the heavenly mind; they will not bring down upon us the Spirit of the living God. “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you,” is the preceptive assurance of an apostle. It is the irrevocable law of the sovereign Ruler; and though his own good pleasure may at times move him to invert it, the most costly oblation at our hands cannot obtain its repeal. The student, the minister, the missionary, may bring his life to the altar, and in “labours more abundant” die at his post, but if the incense of devotion be wanting, the sacrifice will be accounted an abomination in his sight. To our brethren, then, we say with affectionate earnestness, be ye followers of this “Israelite indeed,” in the simplicity, the sincerity, the lowliness, the seraphic fervour of your devotion.

It would afford us great satisfaction to see the narrative part of Dr. Raffles’s discourse, or the closing twenty pages of Dr. Wardlaw’s Memoir, printed in a cheap form for general circulation. There is no class of the community, not even the children of our families and Sabbath-schools, to whom it might not be made eminently useful. We hope there are few of our brethren who have not had the opportunity of reading both the Life and Sermons. Yet we fear while we express our hope. The cost to many is a serious consideration; and it really becomes our churches and congregations to see that such works find their way to the hands of their pastors.

We had marked numerous passages in the discourses, for the perusal of our readers, with the view of illustrating the author’s varied powers; but we dare not trespass further, and we are the more disposed to forbear, because we remember the great disappointment we have sometimes felt in perusing the choicest extracts, torn from the context, and mutilated as they necessarily must be. If our readers had no access to the edifice, they might thank us for conveying to them but a part of a column or capital; as it is, however, they can survey the magnificent structure itself, and relieve us from the unsatisfactory as well as troublesome task of carrying away the “dissecta membra.” We would merely, therefore, direct their attention especially to the discourse on God’s glory in the Sanctuary; on Christ crucified; the Redeemer mighty to save; and the Royalty

of the glorified Redeemer ; they will here see his soundness in the faith. The sermon on the Death of the Rev. W. Roby, that on Parental Duties, and on the Desirableness and Means of spiritual Excitement in the Churches, will, if we mistake not, place his personal piety in a very interesting light. Several of his charges to Ministers and Missionaries are of a high order ; nor do we recollect having seen our distinctive principles as Congregational Dissenters placed in a more lucid, attractive, or convincing form than in the introductory discourses with which these volumes are enriched. But we heartily commend the whole to the perusal of our friends, reminding them that to converse with the mighty and especially with the sanctified dead, is an employment as beneficial as it is delightful.

THE EDITOR'S TABLE.

The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, translated from the original Hebrew, with a Commentary, Critical, Philological, and Exegetical : to which is prefixed, an Introductory Dissertation on the Life and Times of the Prophet, the Character of his Style ; the Authenticity and Integrity of the Book ; and the Principles of prophetic Interpretation. By the Rev. E. Henderson, D. Ph. 8vo. London : Hamilton, Adams, and Co.

Christ's Discourse at Capernaum, fatal to the Doctrine of Transubstantiation ; on the very Principle of Exposition adopted by the Divines of the Roman Church. By G. Stanley Faber, B.D. Master of Sherburn Hospital, and Prebendary of Salisbury. 8vo. London : R. B. Seeley.

Michael Smith, a Memoir for Sunday School Teachers. By W. Davis, Minister of Croft Chapel, Hastings. 12mo. London : Ball and Arnold.

A Key to the Bible, containing a Summary of Biblical Knowledge, and a Dictionary of all the principal Words in the Old and New Testaments. By the Rev. T. Timpson. Illustrated with maps and 124 engravings. 8vo. London : W. Smith, Fleet Street.

Vox Veritatis, or the Voice of Truth. By J. E. Cullen, formerly intended for a Romish Priest. 8vo. 2d edition, considerably enlarged. London : Nisbet and Co.

Religion in Connexion with a National System of Instruction. By W. M. Gunn, Rector, Burgh Schools, Haddington. 12mo. London : Simpkin and Marshall.

The Training System, established in the Glasgow Normal Seminary, and its Model Schools. By D. Stow, Esq. 12mo. A new edition. London : Blackie and Son.

The Church at Work, an Essay on the best Means of promoting the Increase of Places of Worship, of Congregational Hearers, and of Members in Church Fellowship. By E. Leighton. 12mo. London : Ball and Arnold.

Memoirs and Remains of the Rev. J. Griffin, of Portsea. By his Sons. 8vo. London : Hamilton, Adams, and Co.

The Illustrated Commentary on the Old and New Testaments, being a republication of the Notes of the Pictorial Bible, of a size that will range with the authorized editions of the sacred text. Vol. I. 8vo. London : Knight and Co.

Mental Culture. Hints on the best and shortest Way of cultivating the Mind. By a Student of University College, London. With an Introductory Recommendation by the Rev. A. Fletcher, A.M. of Finsbury Chapel. 12mo. London: Ward and Co.

Dipping not Baptizing. By the Rev. W. Thorn, Winchester. 12mo. London: Jackson and Walford.

Infidelity contrasted with Christianity. 12mo. London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co.

A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Brougham, and to the Educated and Intellectual Classes, on the Excellencies and Consolations of "Divine Philosophy." 12mo. London: Nisbet and Co.

The History of the Jews, from the taking of Jerusalem to the present time. 12mo. London: Simpkin and Marshall.

The Ministry of the Gospel, the Service of Christ. A Charge addressed to Mr. J. Hodgins, and Mr. J. D. Smith, late Students in Dublin Theological Institution, in York Street Chapel, Dublin, on Wednesday Evening, June 10th, 1840. By Ralph Wardlaw, D.D. 8vo. Dublin: J. Robertson.

The Book of Quadrupeds, or Outlines of a Popular History of the Class Mammalia, with particular Notice of those mentioned in Scripture. Illustrated by upwards of 30 engravings. 8vo. London: Religious Tract Society.

The Recreation for 1841. 12mo. London: Tilt and Bogue.

Symons's Popular Economy. 8vo. London: Henry Hooper.

Consolation for Christian Mourners; Discourses occasioned by the Death of Friends and other Afflictive Dispensations. By Adam Thomson, D.D. Coldstream. 12mo. London: John Snow.

Cruden's Explanations of Scripture Terms. Taken from his Concordance. 12mo. London: Religious Tract Society.

The Philosophy of Christianity, or the Genuine Christian proved to be the only real Philosopher. By P. Dixon Hardy, M.R.I.A. 12mo. London: Ball and Co.

Cemetery Interment; containing a Concise History of the Modes of Interment practised by the Ancients; Descriptions of Père la Chaise, the Eastern Cemeteries and those of America, the English Metropolitan and Provincial Cemeteries, and more particularly of the Abney Park Cemetery at Stoke Newington, with a Descriptive Catalogue of its Plants and Arboretum. By George Collison, Solicitor. 12mo. London: Longman and Co.

The Illustrated Watts's Hymns. Edited by the Rev. A. Fletcher, of Finsbury Chapel. 8vo. Part I. London: Orger and Merryon.

Narrative of the late George Vason, of Nottingham, one of the first Missionaries sent out by the London Missionary Society in the ship Duff, Captain Wilson, 1796. By the Rev. J. Orange, Derby. 12mo. London: John Snow.

Anna, the Memoir of a School-Girl. 12mo. London: Simpkin and Marshall.

Eastern Arts and Antiquities, mentioned in Sacred Scriptures, with illustrations. 18mo. London: Religious Tract Society.

The Spirit of Popery, an Exposure of its Origin, Characters, and Results, in Letters from a Father to his Children. 12mo. London: Religious Tract Society.

The Old Oak Chest. By the Author of Charlie's Discoveries. London: Harvey and Darton.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES, AT HOME AND ABROAD.

AUTUMNAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION AND HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY, AT BRISTOL.

It is with heartfelt gratitude to the God of peace and love, that we now record the proceedings of our brethren in the city of Bristol, who, in their solemn convocation, were so remarkably favoured with the spirit of peace and charity, of zeal and union, that we anticipate the most blessed results to our churches and to our country from their devout and affectionate deliberations.

The business was commenced by a public service, on Tuesday evening, October 6th, at the Rev. H. J. Roper's chapel, Bridge Street, where a most respectable and crowded auditory assembled, and indicated by their presence the deep interest which the occasion had excited in their minds.

Fervent prayers were offered for the presence and blessing of God upon the meetings of the brethren, by the Rev. Messrs. J. Edwards, Brighton; J. Reynolds, Romsey; and C. N. Davies, Brecon. The Rev. J. Blackburn delivered an address explanatory of the nature and design of the Congregational Union; and the Rev. Dr. Matheson, on the claims of the Home Missionary Society.

On Wednesday morning the Assembly of Delegates met in the spacious room attached to Brunswick Chapel, at nine o'clock, at which the following ministers and gentlemen were present:—

Rev. Messrs.

J. Adey, *Southwark, London*
R. Ashton, *Putney*
J. Barfitt, *Salisbury*
J. Bennett, *D.D. London*
A. Bishop, *Beaminster*
J. Blackburn, *London*
B. Byron, *Newport*
J. Burder, *Stroud*
D. Blow, *Brecon*
S. D. Bergne, *Lincoln*
L. Bewsey, *Knowle*
H. J. Bunn, *Abergavenny*
W. Clark, *Upton*
C. N. Davies, *Brecon*
E. Davies, *Brecon*
J. Edwards, *Brighton*
R. Elliott, *Devizes*
S. Evans, *Rangecorthy*
W. Ellson, *Pill, St. George's*
D. E. Ford, *Lymington*
— Firmie, *Frome*
W. Gear, *Bradford, Wilts*
R. Gill, *Charmouth*
J. C. Gallaway, *Westbromwich*
T. Giles, *Tisbury*
J. Glanville, *Kingswood*
J. Hargreaves, *Morecombelake*
T. Haynes, *Bristol*
J. Hunt, *Brixton*
Joseph Hyatt, *Gloucester*
J. Hill, *Gornal*
J. Hopkins, *Weston-super-Mare*

Rev. Messrs.

R. Harris, *Westbury*
J. Hill, *Almondsbury*
J. Jack, *Bristol*
T. James, *Woolwich*
S. Jackson, *Walsall*
Evan Jones, *Ruscombe*
R. Knill, *London*
T. Kennerley, *Mitcham*
W. Lucy, *Bristol*
R. E. May, *Clevedon*
F. W. Meadows, *South Moulton*
J. Matheson, *D.D. London*
Julius Mark, *Chelmsford*
Thomas Mann, *Troubridge*
D. A. Owen, *Smethwick*
W. J. Palmer, *London*
J. Porter, *Wareham*
J. Pyer, *Deconport*
G. Pinkstone, *South Petherton*
G. Redford, *D.D. LL.D. Worcester*
J. Reynolds, *Romsey*
H. Richard, *London*
E. Russ, *Seaton, Devon*
J. Richards, *Stourbridge*
H. J. Roper, *Bristol*
H. J. Rook, *Faversham*
J. Sibree, *Coventry*
J. Smith, *Hasketon, Suffolk*
E. L. Shadrack, *Dursley*
R. Slate, *Preston*
G. Stevens, *Totton, Hants*
T. G. Stamper, *Uxbridge*

Rev. Messrs.

G. Smith, *Plymouth*
 J. Taylor, *Pitminster*
 J. Tippetis, *Gravesend*
 D. Thomas, *Bristol*
 G. J. Tubbs, *Warminster*
 T. H. Tooke, *Clifton*
 A. Vernon, *Portishead*
 W. Warden, *Ventnor, Isle of Wight*
 A. Wells, *London*
 W. Wheeler, *Wells*
 J. Wills, *Basingstoke*
 J. J. Waite, *Bristol*
 J. Wild, *Nottingham*
 J. S. Wilson, *Shepton Mallett*
 W. B. Woodman, *Romsey*

Messrs.

R. Ash, *Bristol*
 D. Ace, *Brecon*
 W. Armstrong, *Bristol*
 J. Averill, *White's Hill*
 S. Bellamy, *Temple Clond*
 E. Baines, *M. P. Leeds*
 J. Barling, *Bristol*
 T. R. Batchelor, *Newport, Monmouthsh.*
 E. Bryant, *Bath*
 T. G. Bunt, *Bristol*
 J. Bessell, *Bristol*
 T. Challis, *London*
 G. Colthurst, *Bristol*
 J. C. Davie, *Bristol*
 R. Fletcher, *Ditto*
 M. Fisher, *Blandford*
 Joseph Foster, *Bristol*
 James Foster, *Ditto*
 D. H. Goddard, *Ditto*
 J. Godwin, *Ditto*
 C. Godwin, *Ditto*
 J. Herbert, *Taunton*
 R. Hopkins, *Bath*
 B. Humpage, *Bristol*
 E. Humpage, *Ditto*

Messrs.

James James, *Birmingham*
 P. Jackson, *London*
 W. S. Jenkins, *Bristol*
 G. Knox, *London*
 W. H. Kemball, *Bristol*
 J. W. Lowrie, *London*
 C. Lewis, *Newport*
 F. P. Lasbury, *Bristol*
 T. Maund, *Stonehouse*
 R. S. May, *Clifton*
 H. More, *Brecon*
 J. Martin, *Bristol*
 J. Martin, jun. *Ditto*
 S. Newell, *Ditto*
 J. Nowington, *Barnstaple*
 T. Nunnally, *Leicester*
 J. F. Parker, *Birmingham*
 James Peachey, *London*
 W. R. Parkyn, *Knowle*
 H. Pike, *Bristol*
 E. Russell, *Ditto*
 J. Smith, *Ditto*
 J. Smith, *Oakhill*
 J. Sexton, *Westbury, Wilts*
 W. P. Sibree, *Bristol*
 W. Stroud, *M. D. London*
 Alfred Stone, *Wickson*
 T. Seavill, *Newton*
 T. P. Tuppin, *Bristol*
 T. E. Thoresby, *Ditto*
 Jacob Titley, *Bath*
 T. Thompson, *Poundsford Park*
 J. Whitehouse, *Dudley*
 J. Williams, *Brecon*
 H. O. Wills, *Bristol*
 F. Wills, *Ditto*
 W. D. Wills, *Ditto*
 Joshua Wilson, *London*
 Arthur Wells, *Nottingham*
 S. A. Weston, *Hereford*
 W. C. Wells, *Chelmsford*
 W. Whereat, *Bristol*

The Rev. Dr. BENNETT having taken the chair, commenced his address with a few prefatory remarks, and proceeded to refer to the constitution of the Union, and observed, that it is impossible to violate the independency of another without shaking the stability of our own. We, therefore, are all agreed upon that point. But, nevertheless, though we maintain that each separate christian society is a church in the sense of the Scriptures, independently of the authority and controul of others, we never pretended that we were independent of each other's counsel, or affection, or co-operation. We are all equally dependent upon the Sovereign Lord and Head of the whole church and equally dependent upon the co-operation and the mutual affection and prayers of our brethren and each church. While we are deeply sensible of this, we consider that Independency is not merely a theory, that it is a practical good, and that the church of Christ was made independent by him who has done every thing for his own glory, and his church's good, and that the independency of the churches is like all the rest of

his arrangements, a blessing, while it is maintained in that spirit, alike to ourselves and to the world. We think all priestly domination in the church has arisen out of the loss of the liberty of the church, and that just as every church loses the spirit of liberty, it sinks in the spirit of piety, so that true liberty is essential to true prosperity alike in the church and nation. While we, therefore, desire to spread independency for the good of mankind and for the welfare of the church of God, we have no wish to quarrel with others. We should be the last men to deny to others the liberty of thinking for themselves, even though they should think against our system. We have no wish to wage war upon other sects; for that religion that we require in every man that we receive into our churches, appears to us to give every man a claim to our christian affection who chooses to be gathered into the churches of another order. We, therefore, should be exceedingly inconsistent if we were not catholic. We love the people of God wherever we find them, and the prosperity of every other community we regard as our own, because we are but a portion, and we cannot conceal it from ourselves, but a small portion of the whole body of Christ's church; whatever future progress of our principles we may anticipate, we must at present admit that we are but a small section, and therefore to confine our love to ourselves, or to Independent churches, would be to confine it to a single limb or member, and to leave out the great body of the church of God. We love, therefore, the extension of true religion, and quarrel with no man for extending it according to his own convictions; for in that way alone a consistent man can be expected to act with zeal and energy in extending religion. We meet, then, to-day to promote the extension of our churches, without any hostile feeling towards others. Our great care should be to seek that dominance of pure religion among ourselves which is the surest pledge of its extension and prosperity among others. I will not detain our brethren further, as these principles will still more be developed in the course of the speeches which will be addressed to you; but I will now call upon our brethren first to give themselves to prayer for the blessing of God upon our proceedings.

The Rev. H. J. ROOK, of Faversham, then offered prayer, and the meeting having sung the 178th Hymn in the Congregational Hymn Book,

The Rev. J. HILL, of Gornal, continued the exercise of prayer.

It was then stated to the meeting that communications had been received from Rev. Messrs. Thomson, of Chatham, James, of Birmingham, Croft, of Pickering, Reed, of Newcastle, and Harrison, of Barnard Castle.

Copies of the papers proposed for the consideration of the meeting having been distributed on the preceding day the assembly now proceeded to their discussion.

The Chairman suggested, in order to avoid unnecessary debate, that in any case where it was intended to criticise the phraseology, and not the principle, it was desirable that gentlemen would make a note of the verbal criticism intended, and hand it up to the Secretaries, who will give it their best attention when the paper is revised for the press.

The Rev. J. BLACKBURN then proceeded to read the following paper:—

"The Home Missionary Duties of Churches, and the best arrangements for their successful performance."

"It is plain from the New Testament, that in the first ages of Christianity, the labours of the apostles themselves alone excepted, there were no means for the spread of the gospel in the world but such as were supplied by the apostolical churches.

"In the visions of the Apocalypse those churches are exhibited as golden lamp-stands upholding the light of eternal truth, (Rev. i. 12, 13, 20,) for 'men,' said the Saviour, 'do not light a lamp, and put it under a bushel, but on a lamp-bearer, and it giveth light to all that are in the house.' (Matt. v. 15.)

"To this duty the church of Philippi were exhorted by the Apostle Paul. They had been gathered by divine grace from 'the' midst of 'a crooked and perverse generation'; and amongst those ignorant and ungodly neighbours they were commanded to 'shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.' (Phil.

II. 15.) The church at Thessalonica fulfilled this christian obligation, which won from the apostles of the Gentiles this honourable testimony, 'From you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place.' (1 Thess. i. 8.)

"It is obvious, from the earliest uninspired records of Christianity, that the primitive churches retained those principles and practices for several succeeding ages, and that its greatest triumphs resulted, under God, from the personal devotedness of the early Christians.

"The teaching and preaching of the apostles and chief ministers of the gospel were not, therefore, directed to the edification and comfort of believers only, as if they laboured for their exclusive advantage, but with a view to prepare them for usefulness amongst those around them who had not yet received the truth. Paul, therefore, complained of the dulness and sloth of the Hebrew converts, and chided them because 'when for the time they ought to be teachers, they had need that one should teach them again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God.' (Heb. v. 12.)

"The wants of perishing men still require the same efforts, and no church can be truly apostolical and primitive in its constitution, nor increasing greatly in numbers and usefulness, that does not in this respect conform itself to the practice and precedents of the early Christians.

"It is therefore necessary that pastors should, like the apostles, direct their ministry to this object, and remember that it forms one important part of the duty of their sacred office.

"When their Lord and Master ascended to heaven, amongst his other bestowments, he gave some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of saints for the work of the ministry. (Eph. iv. 12.) But ministry admits of several degrees, according to the talents entrusted to each. 'As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.' (1 Peter iv. 10.)

"To develop, increase, and direct these gifts of the people committed to his care is the obvious duty of the pastor, and the following methods have been found, in the experience of many churches, highly subservient to this end, though confessedly subordinate to the instructions of the pulpit.

"I. BIBLE CLASSES FOR THE YOUNG.—The ancient practice of instructing the young by the use of catechetical formularies having greatly declined in our churches, the establishment of Bible classes in some congregations has supplied that omission. In these classes the Bible is the only text-book, and obvious advantages result from appealing to the living oracles as the only standard of faith and practice. The objects to be secured are to ascertain, by sound principles of interpretation, the true sense of the passage, and then to show its bearing upon the characters and circumstances of mankind.

"The exercise may be made alike attractive and useful to the young by illustrations of the manners and customs, and the places and productions, mentioned in the chapter before them. These exercises should, if possible, be conducted by the pastor, but in large churches gifted persons have advantageously presided over such classes composed of children and young people. By maintaining an interrogatory method, attention is kept awake, and the habit of reading the Scriptures with care and reflection is induced, and obscure phrases, which might be the source of perplexity through life, are made plain and intelligible.

"The evangelist Timothy was, from his childhood, trained to eminent usefulness by the study of the Holy Scriptures, and similar efforts will doubtless prepare many more for the work of God.

"II. MEETINGS FOR PRAYER AND FELLOWSHIP.—By the establishment of churches it was doubtless intended to use the social principles of our nature for the promotion of religion, first in the hearts of the associated believers, and then amongst all around them. To excite those principles, however, into effective action, it is necessary that Christians should unite in closer fellowship than that which the acts of public worship afford.

"The first disciples met for social prayer, not only in the temple of the synagogue, but also in private houses. (Acts xii. 12.) The gift and grace of prayer were thus exercised, and the simple utterance of the heart was doubtless a means of refreshment and comfort to others, for 'as face answereth with the face in a glass, so doth the heart of man to man.' If church members are to be useful, they must

be encouraged and assisted to speak to God and to their fellow-men upon the great truths of personal religion. The well known efficiency of the private members of the Wesleyan Methodist connection is chiefly attributable to their frequent religious intercourse with their brethren at class and other meetings for christian fellowship.

"III. A CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY.—Error often assumes the garb of knowledge by which to impose upon the ignorant and the credulous. It is by knowledge, therefore, that the imposture of its advocates can alone be detected and exposed. It is not enough that the people are instructed from the pulpit 'in knowledge and understanding,' but all the subsidiary means which scriptural and holy books afford should be placed within their reach. For if Timothy was commanded to give himself 'to reading,' (1 Tim. iv. 13.) and Paul requested that his books and parchments might be sent to him, it is plain that ministers and Christians, inferior to them in gifts and grace, have need, with diligence, to study the best works on polemical and practical divinity.

"Vestry Libraries, comprising Commentaries on the Holy Scriptures, Theological Treatises, Religious Biography, Church History, and the Narratives of Modern Missionary Enterprises, should be formed wherever practicable, and be made accessible at the lowest possible rate of subscription. For Sabbath School instruction, and other efforts to improve the people, have excited the appetites of myriads for mental food, and christian minds that crave for such aliment should be gratified, that they may be trained to instruct others. The arrangements of the Religious Tract and Bible Societies will render this more practicable in poor congregations, and a seasonable donation of books from a private friend often lays a good foundation for an excellent vestry library.

"By the blessing of the Holy Spirit on such means as these, in connexion with an intelligent, faithful, and affectionate ministry, a church will be prepared to enter upon every 'work of faith and labour of love' that a sanctified expediency may suggest and actual experiment recommend. Amongst such efforts are the following:—

"1. THE EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG.—The care of the children of our families and neighbours is a duty which the opinions and experience of our churches alike commend. *Domestic instruction* preceded and almost rendered needless public teaching for nearly two thousand years, and it is the well-known opinion of Mr. Baxter that the preaching of the gospel would not be the chief means employed to bring souls to God, if christian parents would do their duty. Uninformed themselves, too many have been unable to instruct their offspring in the word of God. (Dent. vi. 7, 8.) Let but our churches consist of intelligent Christians, and we shall soon see well informed christian families.

"*Sunday School Instruction* will also form part of their means of doing good. Not restricting it to the poor, low object of teaching the children the power and use of letters on the Lord's-day, but making it the great business of the school to impart the knowledge, which maketh wise unto salvation. Such schools, where better accommodation cannot be obtained, may be held in our places of worship, and *Branch Sunday Schools*, of great efficiency and value, have been held in cottages or rooms, in the midst of a much neglected population, by two or three devoted brethren who have given themselves to it. Every Sunday School should have a *Library* for the children. The liberal offers of the Sunday School Union and the Religious Tract Society for this object, should, if possible, be accepted.

"Where a church is really too poor to purchase school books, the assistance of the Sunday School Society may be obtained.

"2. INSTRUCTION OF THE NEGLECTED.—Such is the apathy into which the minds of myriads of our countrymen have sunk respecting religion, that nothing short of personal intercourse with them seems likely to arouse them to a consciousness of their real position.

"The voluntary and disinterested *visits of private Christians* of both sexes are believed to be most acceptable to the poor, and are found the best precursors to other and more effective agency. *The systematic loan of Religious Tracts* supplies an occasion for calling upon them; places within their reach the most important truths, and affords opportunities for conversation, inquiry, and advice, as circumstances may suggest. As those domiciliary visits are paid in given districts and sections, so it has been found useful to hold a *local Prayer Meeting* in some cottage or apartment on the spot. Multitudes have first been induced to join in those

exercises, who afterwards have attended the worship of the sanctuary with evident delight. These are duties in which Christians of both sexes engage. More than 3000 church members are, in the Metropolis, steadily visiting more than 60,000 families in this manner, with the most gratifying instances of usefulness. To sustain and extend these efforts, several churches employ *Stipendiary Agents*, who, in some instances, devote the evening of each day, in others, their whole time to the visitation of the sick, the instruction of the inquiring, and the conducting of prayer meetings, &c. *Town or City Missionaries*, as they are usually denominated, are most effective when thus in co-operation with other Christians, by whose countenance they are encouraged and sustained. The system of visitation is explained in 'the Principles and Plan of the Christian Instruction Society;' and the Committee of that institution are ever ready to vote grants of tracts, covered and arranged for the use of visitors, who may be unable to purchase them for that purpose. These, and similar efforts, should be conducted with the sanction, and, if possible, with the superintendence of the pastor or one of the deacons of the church.

"3. PROVISION FOR THE NEEDY.—It is probable that this part of christian duty and of church fellowship has not been sufficiently regarded. In our smaller churches, the *collections at the Lord's table* do not supply sufficient means for the relief of the sick and the aged, the widow and the orphan, amongst them. This deficiency results in part from a practical neglect of the apostle Paul's instructions on this very subject. 'Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.' (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.) Our more prosperous brethren too often put into the plate a small gift, yielding to custom rather than to charity, conforming to the usages of others, rather than offering according to their means. The neglect of poor disciples is a grievous offence against the body of Christ, (James ii. 15, 16; 1 John iii. 17, 18.)

"*Societies for the Relief of the Sick and for the Clothing of the Poor*, are highly valuable, not only as they exhibit the charities of our holy religion, but as they dispose the recipients of this bounty to listen to the gospel from the lips of those whose hands also minister to their necessities.

"It is highly important that our poor brethren should be encouraged to make provision for themselves against sickness, &c. *Provident or Benefit Societies* have been formed in several churches, both in England and Scotland, with many obvious advantages.

"4. CO-OPERATION WITH THE BENEVOLENT.—In this day of benevolent effort, societies are organized in almost every place for the extension of the work of God. It is painful to perceive, in the Metropolis and the other towns and cities in the kingdom, how large an amount of the business of those societies is left in a very few hands. Surely every church should be anxious to supply its proportion of agency to the executive of such institutions; and it must be the duty of the pastors and the most intelligent members of our churches, to take their share in deliberations and labours so anxious and responsible.

"Equally to be regretted, is it, that any church should withhold its fellowship from sister churches in *County or District Associations*. Had combined efforts of this order been vigorously and perseveringly made by Congregational churches in all parts of the kingdom, a much more prosperous and healthy state of things would have been secured than now generally obtains.

"5. EXTENSION OF OUR CHURCHES.—It is humiliating to observe how large a proportion of the churches that have been formed during the present century have originated in party alienation rather than in christian zeal. The churches in America have learned, and some in England begin to perceive, the wisdom and truth of the lesson, that, to extend the cause of Christ successfully, large churches must voluntarily and harmoniously separate to build *new places of worship* where they are needed, and so, by a system of *spiritual colonization*, to occupy the waste places of the land.

"*The British Mission*, which the Congregational churches have adopted for *Home, Ireland, and the Colonies*, claim the systematic and liberal support of our people. Originating and sustaining churches in these important parts of the British empire, will, eventually, supply the best means for sending the gospel 'to the regions beyond them.'

"But churches cannot be multiplied at home, or in the colonies, without an increased number of able ministers. Every church, therefore, should desire to find, amongst its own fellowship, those, who possessing adequate abilities and eminent

piety, are willing to consecrate themselves to this service; and should be ready to sustain, by their prayers and pecuniary assistance, any who wish to enter upon academical studies for the christian ministry.

"It is possible that some may imagine that these efforts are impracticable, in a small and feeble church like their own. Such must be reminded that, time was, when all the believers in the world formed but one church, and that a small community; yet, though few in numbers and feeble in gifts and grace, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, in answer to united and earnest prayer, the little one became a thousand, and the small one a strong nation. May such believing prayer be repeated, and similar success will, doubtless, follow."

The Rev. J. C. GALLAWAY, of Westbromwich, then said—I rise to move the following resolution:

"That the paper on the home missionary duties of churches now read, be received by the meeting for free and open discussion, chiefly on the principles and plans embodied in it, but that verbal criticism be restricted to the mention of errors or improvements, without attempting to adjust finally forms of expression."

I may, perhaps, be permitted to make one or two remarks upon the paper which has just been read, partly with a view to get information, partly to add a little testimony in favour of some of its very important statements. The document says, "The wants of perishing men still require the same efforts, and no church can be truly apostolic and primitive in its constitution, nor increase greatly in numbers and usefulness, that does not, in this respect, conform itself to the practice and precedents of the early Christians." I feel able, Sir, in connection with the church over which God has placed me, to give my full concurrence in that sentiment. I have found, that just in proportion as the sentiments laid down in the previous part of this paper, the duty of labouring for the cause of Christ and for the conversion of our neighbours, has been urged upon the people, they have been ready to come forward; and, considering the poor condition of those among whom God has stationed me, I have been very much struck with the effect which has been produced by pressing these principles upon their minds. They have come forward with various efforts to extend the gospel in our neighbourhood, which, I must say, have astonished me, when I have considered their previous listlessness and inactivity. In reference to the second topic mentioned here—meetings for prayer and christian fellowship—I have endeavoured, taking the suggestions contained in that excellent book, "*Jethro*," to form associations in different parts of the parish for this purpose, and, after a trial of nearly twelve months, I have succeeded to a great extent. Nothing has occurred that has at all tended to promote divisions, but the meetings have tended to create brotherly love, and promote great activity in the respective localities. It struck me, when the Sunday School system was referred to, that one point was omitted. It appears to me that it should be so constructed as to admit the children of the congregation generally, without confining such instruction entirely to the offspring of the poor. I believe this principle has been adopted by some of our ministers, and if it had been introduced here it might have been attended with good effects. I regret, also, that no reference is made to lay preaching—a subject which is brought to our attention in the excellent work to which I have already alluded. I may, perhaps, be permitted to say, and I hope I do so with a right motive, that I have endeavoured to encourage lay preaching, and found it not attended with any painful consequences. There is one subject upon which I should be glad to receive information from my brethren, namely, the working of provident and benevolent societies in connection with churches, how far they have succeeded, and in what manner they have been conducted.

The Rev. D. E. FORD, of Lymington, then rose, and said—With great pleasure, Sir, I second the resolution, assured as I am that the glory of Christ in the salvation of souls, and the prosperity of our churches, will depend, under God, on carrying out the principles stated in this paper. If we can but

impress on the public mind, if we can but get our christian brethren to believe, that they actually may save souls from death if they will only work for God, I am persuaded that great good will result. It is high time for our churches to learn the fact, that they are not converted to God

"To sit and sing themselves away
To everlasting bliss."

It is quite time for them utterly to disavow such a principle, and to come forward as missionaries to their fellow men. I thank God that, on a small scale, I have seen what may be done by activity. I have seen families brought to God by plain men, who just knew the way to heaven, and were just capable of telling others about the Saviour of the world. I had a young man in my congregation who spent the greater part of his leisure time in wandering about our forest as a missionary; and, in the course of his visits, he actually found an intelligent man who had never heard of the scheme of redemption at all. On conversing with him, the man burst into tears, and said, "Is it possible that God Almighty has ever been so kind?" I have seen, by the same instrumentality, one whole family brought to God; and the agent, brethren, is a journeyman, working often from five in the morning until nine in the evening. He makes the Sabbath, not a day of leisure, but a day of holy activity, contenting himself with one sermon, and then devoting the remainder of its hours to holy labour for God. If all the churches of our country would imitate this example, we should soon see the wilderness and the solitary place blossom as the rose. I have sometimes frightened Christians by asking them how many people they have brought to God? It has grieved me to hear them reply, "I fear not one." "Why, what," I have said, "what have you been doing for Christ?" I know scores, yea hundreds of churches, who never put forth the slightest energy for the salvation of souls. Among the topics touched upon in this paper is that of prayer-meetings. I think it would be an improvement to suggest something as to the classification of the persons by whom these meetings should be conducted. In the small congregation in which I labour, we find this practice attended with very pleasing and beneficial results. Our hopeful young men have a prayer-meeting to themselves, and that prayer-meeting has worked well for many years. Some of my brethren said it was a rather dangerous experiment: I can only say that I have never found it so. Many of those young men are now most valuable members of my church: not one has occasioned me uneasiness, and one of them is now a devoted minister in the north of England. It has been simply a meeting of young men. Every Lord's day evening they have met by themselves, without interruption, and without the presence of older brethren; and thus they have improved each other's gifts in prayer, and strengthened each other's hands. I hope, Sir, you will not think me very far gone in Methodism, if I allude, for one moment, to female prayer-meetings. In the church where I labour we have adopted the practice of holding such meetings, and we find them attended with unmixed benefit. Again, we have prayer-meetings for the little children, which are held once a week in private houses, and conducted by the teachers. On these occasions mere babes are permitted to pray. We must, if we would come to "the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty," we must exert ourselves in every possible manner. I am sure that many souls have perished whilst we have slumbered at our posts. There is another mode of doing good which is not referred to in this paper. I have in my congregation some very pious and devoted sailors, and every Sunday morning they scour the quay, and bring to the house of God as many shipmates and others as they can prevail upon to enter. I really wish that this was carried out in all our churches. Let us have a press-gang to scour our villages and the back streets of our towns, and to bring the poor benighted people to the house of God. I am persuaded that even more good might be done in this way than by having services among them. They will think themselves a degraded and unwelcome class, unless we take them by the hand, and bring them to the sanctuary. Our dear friend from Westbromwich

has anticipated what I had to say about Sabbath-schools, and therefore I will not touch upon that matter, unless it be to express a hope that I may live to see the day when Sabbath Schools shall have for their object simply and solely the conversion of children. When God began, in a remarkable manner, to pour down his blessing on the church over which I preside, I mentioned this subject to the teachers of the school. They owned that there was a deficiency in the school, and I believe many sincere tears were shed on that occasion. A very short time afterwards there was an evident alteration; some of our Sabbath School children were brought to God; others were under hopeful impressions; and I believe I can say, that we have not at present one unconverted teacher, and not one who does not make it his or her daily prayer, that all the children committed to their charge may be brought to God. According to the old system, the children, when they grew up into life, soon forgot all that they had learnt at school. I must apologize for these rambling remarks; and I second the resolution with all my heart, and I pray that God will visit our churches, and that his Spirit may descend upon us in a large and copious effusion.

The Rev. J. BARFITT, of Salisbury, wished to support the resolution. His object was to corroborate what the last speaker had said in reference to lay preaching. There was a time when he (Mr. Barfitt) had some doubts upon this subject, at least with reference to the particular agencies which were sometimes employed. But he would state to the meeting a case in which it had been attended with great success. There was a village, about six miles from the city of Salisbury, containing a population of six hundred souls, where the gospel had not been preached for many years. Efforts had been made to get it introduced, but for a long time, through the opposition it was always met with, every application, by whomsoever made, had proved unsuccessful. At last the way was prepared, and at that time there was a very interesting chapel in that village, which was principally supplied by lay brethren connected with the churches in the neighbourhood. There was amongst them one individual, humble in talent, and humble in circumstances, yet a man of deep piety, who was enabled now and then to speak of what he had tasted and handled himself; and this individual, as they had every reason to believe, had been made the instrument in the conversion of no less than ten persons within two years of his labours. He (Mr. Barfitt) was called to improve the death of three individuals who were brought to the knowledge of the truth through that person's instrumentality, and who, he doubted not, were now in glory.

The motion having been agreed to, the meeting proceeded to discuss the several clauses of the paper seriatim. As our space will not admit of entering into the discussions at length, we shall only give those points which possess the greatest and most general interest.

In the discussion of *Bible Classes*, the Rev. J. Sibree, of Coventry, inquired if the brethren could recommend any particular book for the use of Bible classes?

The Rev. J. BLACKBURN stated that he had tried several of the works published, with a view to assist the Bible classes, but he had found most of them very much like the corks which boys use to help them to swim, by which they are in great danger of being drowned. He thought it was a duty ministers owed to themselves to study the word of God critically, and that if brethren would prepare for the Bible class with labour and study, they would derive from the exercise great advantage themselves as well as confer it on their pupils.

The Rev. J. REYNOLDS had introduced into his Bible class, he believed with great advantage, the printed declaration of the faith and order of their churches. His plan was to take the articles of faith seriatim, requiring scriptural proof in support of each. Having gone through the faith, they were then about to commence with the order of the churches. He hoped thus to promote sound instruction, both in scriptural and in congregational principles. His class of young men, thirty in number, attended him once a fortnight, and afforded him great encouragement by the intelligence and diligence which they manifested.

The Rev. Dr. MATHESON trusted that the remarks which had been thrown out would convince all present of the great importance of teaching the young the peculiar and distinctive principles of our churches. He wished to remark, respecting books for the classes, that he (Dr. Matheson) had found those the best which contained questions only, and left the young people to find their own answers, by which their interest is kept awake.

The Rev. — FERNIE, of Frome, stated that the book which, in connection with the Bible, he had used with the greatest success, was the *Pilgrim's Progress*. He had also used the marginal references, and by this means an astonishing amount of scriptural instruction had been conveyed to the minds of the young people in his class. He had never been able to follow the plan of any book which had been published.

The Rev. J. HILL said it was exceedingly important that the conductors of the classes should always enter upon the duty in a right state of mind. He was afraid that they often engaged in the work without being deeply impressed with the magnitude of the object. Let it be remembered that the object to be kept constantly in view was the conversion of every person entrusted to their care, that their hearts might burn with love, and be filled with an intense desire for the salvation of their souls.

Rev. Dr. MATHESON referred to maternal associations, as important means of usefulness; though he admitted that they required the most prudent management, yet they had in many places been attended with the most beneficial results. He thought they were well worthy of consideration.

The Rev. J. BLACKBURN said, that that plan of usefulness was before the mind of the author of the paper, but the objections to it were such that it was omitted.

HENRY WILLS, Esq., of Bristol, felt very great pleasure in bearing his testimony to the efficiency of *cottage prayer-meetings*, as a means of bringing those forward to pray who would not engage in public meetings, and of benefiting those who are not sufficiently well attired to come into our chapels. Persons of that description were thus induced first to hear prayer and afterwards to engage in it, and they had had the pleasure of admitting several into the churches who were first of all brought under the influence of the gospel through cottage prayer-meetings. They had four such meetings every Sabbath-day, and not only had numbers by this means been added to the church, but a vast number of their young members had begun to pray, and now more than three-fourths of the lay-members, amounting to eighty, engage in prayer.

On the subject of *Congregational Libraries*,

Rev. R. GILL, of Charmouth, said he wished to put ministers on their guard against an insidious practice of some socialists, who have actually sent their books as presents for Congregational libraries, which, for want of examination, have actually got into circulation before their character was detected.

The Rev. G. STEVENS, of Totton—And for want of the same examination, a publication was circulated containing five-and-twenty reasons why I ought not to be a dissenter.

On the *Education of the Young*,

Dr. MATHESON observed, that the time was now come when our denomination was called upon to put forth some recommendation respecting the instruction of the young throughout the week. It was now essential, if not to their existence, yet to their progress, and to their respectability, that wherever it was practicable, there should be a week-day school in connexion with their churches. They could not but be aware, that attempts were then making, he would not say to destroy, but to impede what they all considered to be the progress of true christian liberty. Such attempts were both numerous and powerful, and he was afraid they would also be efficient, unless some means were adopted to counteract them. He was afraid that even their Sunday-schools might suffer from these causes, and he would therefore recommend that a few lines should be inserted in the paper upon that subject.

The CHAIRMAN said he felt the importance of the remarks which had fallen

from Dr. Matheson, and had no doubt that any suggestion upon the subject from the Congregational Union would have great weight. In reference to his own place, they had a weekly school for boys and girls, though in their Sabbath-school they were separate.

The Rev. R. SLATE, of Preston, observed that he knew a town where there were fifty thousand inhabitants, and there was not in that town a single day school that was unsectarian.

The Rev. J. BARFITT said that in Salisbury they were continually losing Sabbath-school children, not by any direct open attacks, but by just that system of proceeding which he wished from his heart were adopted by themselves.

The Rev. J. EDWARDS, of Brighton, thought that many were deterred from taking any part in the establishment of day-schools, by the idea that they would not be able to sustain the expenses. In his own neighbourhood they had a most efficient master, and very much depended upon this. They gave that master £120 a-year, and the children gave three halfpence, or two-pence if they were taught to write. That brought in from £2. 12s. to £2. 14s. a-week; so that the school was supported principally by the pence of the children. Let there only be a good master, and success was almost certain.

The Rev. J. BLACKBURN put it to the meeting whether they would refer in the paper to the assistance cheerfully afforded by the Government in aid of the building of school-houses.

HENRY WILLS, Esq. observed, that if they allowed themselves to take money for the purpose of scriptural education, they must allow the Catholic, the Socinian, and all other denominations to have the same assistance in disseminating their sentiments. He hoped, on this account, that no such recommendation would be inserted.

It was observed by several gentlemen that this was a controverted point, and the subject then dropped.

H. WILLS, Esq. proposed to insert a recommendation to parents to bring their children more frequently to the house of God. In many places of worship they would see nearly all the pews filled with adults, and scarcely a child in them. He thought this one of the most important things connected with education.

An interesting conversation took place on the importance of making provision for the poor of the churches; but no addition to the paper was proposed upon the subject.

THOMAS CHALLIS, Esq. of London, then rose to move "That the Paper on the Home Missionary Duties of Churches be approved and adopted by this Meeting, subject to such improvements, as have been suggested in the course of the preceding discussion with evident approval. That the Committee of the Union be entrusted with the revision of the document, in accordance with this Resolution, and that when revised it be inserted in the printed minutes of this meeting," and spoke as follows:—"There are two features, Sir, in the discussion that has taken place upon this document, which have certainly occasioned in my mind deep interest and anxiety; the first is this: It has been recommended by some of our friends, in their deep anxiety to disseminate our distinctive principles, that they should be mixed up with the means employed to disseminate religious instruction. I was delighted to hear one gentleman say that the plan he had adopted was to keep them distinct. I hope this will always be done; that it will always be remembered, that however important they may be in themselves, they ought not to be mixed up with spiritual things. The great secret of our success in Bible classes, and I have had some experience in this way; out of eighteen or twenty young men connected with a Bible class, I have seen seventeen or eighteen join the church within a year after its formation; the great secret, I say, of their success lies in keeping such matters distinct; and I am quite sure that we shall spoil both objects if we attempt to mix them up in the way that has been suggested. The other remark I have to make is, that while you are studying to devolve upon the members of your churches all

those auxiliary duties which they are capable of performing in connection with the minister, you ought to be exceedingly careful that you do not lower the estimate of the preaching of the gospel in the minds of young people. There is some danger, that if you attach too great importance to lay agency, the individuals employed will become of more consequence than it is desirable that they should be; that they will, in short, feel their own labours to be of equal importance with the preachers of the gospel. Now a greater error could not be introduced into our churches. He (Mr. Challis) should be borne out by all his lay friends present, that it was their wish, in all their engagements, to be impressed with the value of the preaching of the gospel, and not to set up any separate means in its place.

The Rev. G. SMITH, of Plymouth, on rising to second the motion, said, I exceedingly rejoice that so valuable a paper has passed through discussion; that the whole of the principles set forth meet with the unanimous approval of this meeting; and that the document embodying those principles, will go forth to the world and be made to tell, as I hope it will, efficiently on our churches. There is a recognition in this paper of a very important and affecting fact, namely, that our country has a deep, powerful, and growing claim upon the efforts of our churches. We would not be unmindful of what other denominations are doing for the world; we would not be unmindful of what they are doing for our country, but we ought to bear prominently and perpetually in mind, that our country has a strong claim upon our own denomination. Let every other church arouse itself, and do what is absolutely needful in its own judgment to meet the necessities of the country; but let us remember, that there is a very solemn and responsible duty resting upon us in reference to the evangelization of Britain. If it be our duty to circulate the Bible in China, to preach the gospel in India; if it be our duty to circulate tracts in Africa, and to instruct the various tribes of our world, it is certainly pre-eminently our duty to do all this in behalf of our own population; and whilst I am greatly interested in the London Missionary Society, and in all its operations, and would not have a single farthing subtracted from the funds of that society, I do feel that there has been nothing done yet that is adequate to the extension of the gospel in our own country. I do, therefore, feel delighted, I am under the influence of a joy and satisfaction to which I could not give utterance—that this Congregational Union has taken up in a decided manner the work of Home Missions, the work of evangelizing our own country. The mere fact that attention has been called to it for successive years; the mere fact that hundreds of brethren journeyed from different parts of the country to be present at the meeting in Birmingham last year, and that we have now as large an attendance, is to me a sufficient pledge, a delightful earnest that the good work in which we have engaged will go on. (Cheers.) Then there is a recognition in this paper of the fact that we are prepared, as Congregational churches, to do something in order to meet the necessities of the growing population of our land. I have not a great deal of sympathy, Sir, with the remark put forth to-day, implying that the Wesleyan body have more power and are in a more useful state than our denomination. I do believe, that no denomination in the length and breadth of Britain, is at the present moment putting forth such an amount of holy and combined effort for the welfare of the land. It is impossible to refer to that book entitled "Our Country"—and I would refer to it in terms of great commendation, if the author were not present—without feeling that our denomination is in a most healthful and hopeful condition. We have wealth, Sir; we have intelligence; we are free; we are untrammelled; we have no fetters to bind us; we are under no domineering power; the world is before us; the country is before us; every part of Great Britain is our parish; and we have no limit whatever put upon our operations, but the means placed within our reach and the necessities of the people who supplicate our aid. And then, I think there is very much in the spirit of the times which is pre-eminently favourable to a renewed and aggressive effort upon the mass of ignorance, darkness, and degradation found in our land. Our prin-

ciples do obtain much of approbation and much of favour from the intelligent, educated, and thinking portion of the middle classes of society; and there is our stronghold. I have no great sympathy with my friend, Mr. Challis, in the remark which he made as to our distinctive peculiarities. If they are worth any thing they are worth every thing; if they are worth being propagated in any form, they are worth being inculcated in connection with the propagation of spiritual truth. So far from thinking this any diminution of their value, it is this which makes them pre-eminently valuable. If I could not enforce them from the desk—if I could not enforce them in the sanctuary—if I could not enforce them in the parlour—if I could not pray for their extension upon bended knees at the throne of grace, then I would throw them to the winds. But, Sir, if they do enter into the life and soul of Christianity—if they are inseparably connected with the spirituality of the kingdom of Christ, and with the advancement of the glory of the Saviour, then let us seek, by every suitable means, to imbue the minds of our young people with them? let us see that they rise up into life educated in them, and let us see that every practical value shall be derived from them in the efforts which we are making to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. I feel, Sir, from the position that we occupy to-day, that we are on the point of doing much more than we have hitherto done for British missions. I know we shall be subject to the ridicule, contempt, and scorn of the whole hierarchy of this country, if we do not come forward and do something on behalf of this great undertaking. I have just glanced at the report of the Pastoral Aid Society, and there I find, that during one year there have been collected between seventeen and eighteen thousand pounds for the advancement of its peculiar objects. And is there not wealth, are there not means in our churches, to raise seventeen or eighteen thousand pounds annually for the advancement of our Home Missions? I am confident that there is. Let us but feel the importance of the duty with which we are occupied, and we shall do it. Let us do it in united, prayerful, and humble dependance upon the Spirit of God, and our "work of faith and labour of love" will not be "in vain in the Lord." It is delightful to think that there is so much unity of principle and of feeling in this meeting; that though we may differ on many of the details by which we are to carry out these plans, yet we all agree in recognizing the principles which have been so ably and effectually put forth in this paper. I have very much pleasure in seconding the resolution which goes to its adoption, subject to the emendations and alterations which have been suggested.

The motion having been unanimously adopted, the Chairman called upon the Rev. A. Wells, who read the following paper:—

"Hints for the Improvement of Associations of Independent Churches, and for promoting their more decided Home-Missionary character and efficiency."

"INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

"ASSOCIATIONS AMONG INDEPENDENT CHURCHES OF EARLY ORIGIN.—Associations of Independent churches are not novelties. They have formed a part of the ecclesiastical polity of Independents from the earliest periods in their history at which they became practicable. In this country; in the states of New England; in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland; more recently in the colonies of Canada and Australia,—the Congregational churches, so soon as they began to multiply, began also to associate. The sentiment among Independents, that for some purposes, associations of churches are indispensable, and that for many they are desirable, advantageous, and pleasant, has been as strong as the conviction, that each church ought to act distinctly and independently for the management of its own affairs. Just about a century ago, our eminent and devoted Doddridge was labouring to improve the associations which he visited in Norfolk and Suffolk, as well as that in Northamptonshire with which he was more immediately connected. The object of his efforts was indeed more exclusively the promotion, through the associations, of the revival of religion among the pastors and churches they embraced; but it cannot be doubted that at this day he would have laboured with indefatigable ardour to promote, by the same means, the more extended operations of the British missions.

"CHARACTER OF ASSOCIATIONS.—Associations of christian churches, such as have hitherto existed among Congregational Christians, or in that more efficient state into which it is now desired to bring them, are not pleaded for as formally and expressly of divine appointment; neither is it wished that they should be invested with authority, or invade the liberties and rights of any church or pastor. They are voluntary institutions, equally with Bible and Missionary Societies, and yet of a somewhat more scriptural character than they, inasmuch as there is no trace in the New Testament of christian organization except through churches; but there are found in the Apostolic Records, indications of the fellowship, correspondence, and co-operation of churches, as such, for great christian purposes.

"DESIGNS OF ASSOCIATIONS STRICTLY SCRIPTURAL.—The objects for which these associations are formed, are strictly of divine authority. They are, the recognized oneness of all churches,—the united concern of churches and pastors for the great interests of the gospel,—their combined efforts for the advance of the Saviour's kingdom. It cannot admit of doubt, whether it is the will of Christ that such general, expansive objects should be regarded by his churches. In forming associations among christian churches for promoting these great designs, they are merely arranging the necessary means for the performance of unquestionable duties.

"IMPORTANCE OF ASSOCIATIONS.—It is obvious, that such objects cannot be attained by churches which limit their regards and actions to their own particular affairs. It should not be thought that because the primary object of the organization of each church is its own welfare and increase, it has no further duties to discharge, or even that its own spiritual prosperity can be effectually secured without attention to some objects of more general interest and import. Experience of the need of some such fellowship, before associations existed, and of their benefit when formed, has led to general conviction in their favour. It is now only sought to improve these associations, by advancing them to all the efficiency of which they are susceptible. No other design has given rise to the following suggestions, which are submitted respectfully to the judgment of the churches throughout our country; not without hope that they will meet with good acceptance, and contribute, through the improvement of associations, to the general prosperity and efficiency of the entire Independent community.

"UNIFORMITY AMONG ASSOCIATIONS DESIRABLE.—In general, it may be remarked, that the brethren united in the several associations, do not so much need instruction how to improve their organization, as to have their attention called to the importance of this object. Their efforts once directed to it, their own wisdom and experience would easily effect all necessary arrangements. And yet as it is now more than ever necessary that, with a view to combined action, there should be agreement among all the associations, at least in some leading principles and plans, these recommendations, respectfully submitted by the general Union, may be, on that account, of the greater value and use.

"OBJECTS OF ASSOCIATIONS.—The primary object of associations of Independent churches is—**TO OBTAIN THE BENEFIT OF EXTENDING CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**—in the following particulars.

"1. In the recognition of the churches and pastors admitted into association as sound in faith and practice, and worthy of fellowship with all churches of a like faith and order.

"2. In the devout, fraternal intercourse of the pastors of the associated churches, on all subjects, interesting to them as ministers of Christ.

"3. In combined efforts for the spread of the gospel within the limits of the associated churches; conducted in harmony with their own distinctive principles.

"4. In united proceedings for promoting the general interests of the associated churches, whether sacred or civil.

"5. In a wise care to promote, within the association, the spirit of love, and the power of religion.

"6. In establishing, for the accomplishment of like purposes, on a more extensive scale, a connexion between the several associations and the general Congregational Union of England and Wales.

"MEANS FOR ACCOMPLISHING THE OBJECTS OF ASSOCIATIONS.—The means for the accomplishment of these objects, are chiefly the following:—

"1. The conscientious and diligent care of each church, and its pastors, to sustain the general movements of the association, by carrying them into vigorous effect, so far as they apply to each community and locality.

" 2. The stated and liberal pecuniary contributions of the combined churches:—first, for their own local objects and efforts; and then, in aid of the more extended movements of the denomination, through its general union.

" 3. General annual meetings of the association which ought to include,—

" I. Distinct meetings of pastors only, for strictly ministerial fellowship.

" II. Meetings of the pastors and delegates of churches, for the management of the funds of the association, and for confidential discussion on all its affairs.

" III. Devotional meetings; including prayer, sermons, and administration of the Lord's Supper.

" IV. Public meetings for business; to excite the interest and to obtain the sanction of the brethren and friends generally for the proceedings of the association.*

" 4. A county association may often, with great advantage, be divided into several districts. The immediate care of the Home Missions of each district, to be confided to its Committee. The district meeting to be held half-yearly. These meetings, from the number of brethren present being fewer, and those more intimately acquainted with each other's position, and having less business to transact, may be most beneficially devoted to purposes of religious improvement.

" 5. The assisting of chapel cases within the bounds of the association, and the giving them its sanction for a guarantee in more extended applications for aid.

" 6. The wide circulation among the members of the associated churches of an annual report, exhibiting the proceedings of the association, and arousing the brethren to greater efforts for its objects; besides the circulation of the reports, documents, and publications of the General Union; as also of tracts and books, illustrative of the history, principles, and interests of the Independent denomination.

" 7. The securing of accurate statistical returns relative to education and religion, and the transmission of copies of such returns to the Committee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

" 8. Diligent inquiry at every meeting of the Association, in the assembly of pastors and delegates, into the state of religion; and into those methods for promoting its prosperity among the associated churches, which present circumstances shall seem to require; and the communication to the more public meetings, of the conclusions arrived at on these points, so far as may be deemed wise and beneficial, with a view to interest the people generally, and to secure their co-operation.

" GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

" **ZEAL FOR THE ASSOCIATION, THE DUTY OF EVERY PASTOR AND CHURCH MEMBER.**—Every pastor, every member of our churches, according to their several opportunities of usefulness, after the duty to their own particular church has been fulfilled, should regard the interests of the Association, as having the next immediate claim on their care and efforts, and as opening the next most advantageous opportunity for usefulness in the cause of Christ. Associations should be consciously sustained and served. Contributions to their funds, attendance at their meetings, interest and effort for their prosperity, should be universal throughout the churches.

" **PASTORS SHOULD PUBLICLY AND ZEALOUSLY ADVOCATE ASSOCIATIONS.**—It is certainly the most effectual way, perhaps it is the only way, by which public objects can obtain the approval and secure the interest of Congregational churches, that they should be zealously and frequently recommended by their pastors. Were associations thus recommended, they would not long remain crippled for

* "The following is submitted as a sketch of the proceedings of an association meeting:—

" I. First proceeding—a meeting of pastors for ministerial fellowship, to commence at four o'clock, and continue through the evening.

" II. On the following morning, an early public devotional meeting, to begin at seven o'clock.

" III. A morning meeting of pastors and delegates, to commence at nine o'clock, and to be continued in the afternoon.

" IV. A sermon in the evening, followed by a Communion service.

" V. On the following day, the early devotional meeting, and the meeting of pastors and delegates to be repeated.

" VI. In the evening, the whole to be closed by a public meeting for business."

want of support. The people are ready to respond to the appeals of their pastors. The responsibility in this most important affair, rests with the ministers of the Congregational body.

"EVERY ASSOCIATION SHOULD INCLUDE BOTH CHURCHES AND PASTORS.—No association should be limited to pastors only, nor to the purposes, however delightful and beneficial, of brotherly ministerial fellowship. These should be invariably included in the arrangements of every association; but to be complete—to be what the present times demand—to be in harmony with the principles of our Independent polity, an association should consist of churches and their pastors; should be formed for public objects, and conducted by the pastors and delegates, freely chosen by the associated churches.

"ASSOCIATIONS SHOULD BE OF MODERATE EXTENT.—It would greatly promote the regular attendance at the meetings of associations, and in that and many other ways secure their prosperity, if the districts embraced be of moderate extent, and their boundaries skilfully arranged with a view to the objects specially designed, without any scrupulous regard to the divisions of our country for civil purposes.

"ASSOCIATIONS SHOULD SUSTAIN AND MANAGE HOME MISSIONS.—Home Missions, within the limits of each association, should not be severed from it; they form the appropriate work and care of the association of the churches and their pastors; which, deprived of this, its natural object, must greatly fail of public interest and importance. And the association should, wherever practicable, be itself the auxiliary in aid of the British missions of the Independent body.

"PRACTICAL OBJECTS OPEN TO ASSOCIATIONS.—There seem to be open to the direct, beneficial action of the several associations, the following important public objects, in addition to all the wise proceedings by which, within themselves, love, truth, and godliness, may be promoted:—I. Home missions within their own districts. II. The support of colleges for the education of our ministers. III. British missions in England, Ireland, and the Colonies, in connexion with the Congregational Union. IV. Enlarged fellowship; and the publication and statistical departments of the General Union.

"DEPUTATIONS AT ASSOCIATION MEETINGS RECOMMENDED.—It might greatly promote the interests and efficiency of the several associations to obtain, at their public meetings, deputations from the Committee of the General Union in London, or from other associations; thus would fellowship be enlarged, and intelligence diffused.

"ASSOCIATIONS NEEDED FOR PRESENT DEFENCE AND PROMOTION OF CONGREGATIONAL PRINCIPLES.—The great points of doctrine, and of the administration of Christ's kingdom, for which Independent churches bear witness, are at this time of such manifest importance as to demand the faithful and combined efforts of all those churches and their pastors for their maintenance and diffusion—a duty which has unhappily not hitherto been adequately performed.

"ASSOCIATIONS DESIRABLE IN ORDER TO A GENERAL UNION OF THE INDEPENDENT CHURCHES.—The Independent churches, secure in the uninvaded right of administering the laws of Christ, each with itself, yet require, for enlarged communion, mutual support, and general efforts in the cause of religion, a union, organized first in district associations, and through them in a more extended confederation.

"CONCLUDING ADDRESS.

"Fathers and brethren of the Congregational body! Beloved pastors, deacons, and members of Independent churches!—the Committee of the Congregational Union, with great brevity, address a respectful appeal to you on this important subject. Very generally you stand connected with district associations of churches and pastors. Universally the sentiment prevails among you, that such fellowship is as delightful as it is necessary. It is needless to reason on behalf of associations, for you are already convinced of their value. It is needless to plead for love, unless it be for *more* love; for already ye are taught of God to love one another. But associations, at present, are not what they ought to be; they are not doing what they ought to do. Their meetings are not attended by the numbers that ought to flock to them, nor characterized by the deep feeling and holy results that ought to attend them. They are not sustained by the ample funds they both require and deserve. They do not excite and strengthen warm attachment to Congregational principles in the degree they ought to do, and might do. They do not effectually

form a medium of oneness among all the churches, nor call up the sentiment and feeling in the minds of all the brethren that the Independent churches are one community—many churches, but one body—having the same doctrines, discipline, worship, interests, and objects. They do not, as yet, aid British missions near and remote—the education of ministers—the diffusion of intelligence—as they might do.

“These defects are honestly and plainly stated, that they may be remedied. You can remedy them. Where the organization of associations is defective, you can improve it. If interest in their objects and proceedings be at a low ebb, you can increase it. If their meetings are wanting in life, power, importance, you can raise them to a higher tone. If they have not heretofore embraced great practical objects, you can in future include such purposes in their range.

“How noble an opportunity is here before you, to render such unions of churches and pastors hallowed combinations for the noblest purposes! What meetings may you not obtain for ministerial fellowship, in which the mature wisdom and piety of aged pastors may instruct, confirm, and elevate the souls of their younger brethren! What seasons would present themselves for communication and counsel on all the great interests, changes, and wants of this eventful age! With what power, with what wisdom, might the brethren and the churches be prepared by such fellowship to act for their country, and for the world! How different the position and the efficiency of the same number of churches when united, than when isolated! How happy, how invigorated, how improved, will the churches be, when in each district the meeting of the association is looked to as the season of deepest interest known within their fellowship, its proceedings the most spirit-stirring; its objects the most approved; its communion the most intimate and endeared!

“The Committee refer the whole subject to your candour and your wisdom—to your prayers and your efforts. On their part they delight to be your servants for Jesus' sake; and in any way to promote a cause equally dear to you and to them.”

The Rev. R. ELLIOTT, of Devizes, very briefly proposed,

“That the paper on the improvement of Associations, now read, be received by the meeting for discussion, chiefly in respect to the principles and proposals embodied in it; but that attempts to settle alterations in the phraseology be avoided, though suggestions on such points may with great propriety and advantage be offered.”

Observing, that many of his brethren present felt an intense interest upon this subject,

The Rev. THOMAS JAMES, of Woolwich, in seconding the motion, observed that the subject was one of the most delicate nature, and which might, perhaps, excite the jealousy of some of the brethren. It ought, therefore, to be entered upon with the greatest care and in humble dependence upon the Spirit of God. He thought that the associations were greatly improving; and the intention of the Committee who drew up the paper was simply that the associations should take the various points here suggested to them into consideration, leaving it to their own judgment whether or not they would adopt them.

On the clause “importance of associations,”

The Rev. G. SMITH observed, that the practical value of the associations would be greatly augmented if they were to keep in view the recognition of the parties. An individual coming from Cumberland to Cornwall might contrive to fasten himself upon a church without any knowledge being obtained of his real character, and then, simply because he was a pastor of that church, he would get into the association. He was exceedingly pleased, on a recent occasion, when his respected brother brought with him a letter of recommendation, signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the association he had left, and thought that great advantage would accrue if such an excellent practice were generally adopted. There were many worthless vagabonds going about the country and fastening themselves on churches for the want of some regulations of this kind.

The Rev. J. SIBREE, of Coventry, begged to say that the Leicestershire

Association had for some time adopted the plan of giving letters of confidence, and it had proved very beneficial.

The Rev. J. BLACKBURN suggested that a note might be inserted embodying their views. The Assembly, he said, could not issue any order on the subject, having no authority; but respecting its importance, all present were agreed.

The Rev. R. ELLIOTT quite approved of what had been said, but they must not go beyond a recommendation. In some particular instances there might be, he said, discord between a minister and an association which did not at all involve religious character, and if it were in their power, on this account, to put a ban upon him, woe be to him.

The Rev. — GREGORY, of Clifton, would like to know how such a rule would affect a minister who was not a member of the county association—whether it would be required that he be a member of that body in order to his obtaining fraternal intercourse with his brethren and their recognition, recommendation, and support? It was all very well, as had been stated, to exclude vagabonds from the church, but care should be taken that in excluding the bad they did not at the same time exclude the good.

The CHAIRMAN remarked, that the Congregational Union had nothing to do with the question, but it belonged solely to the association.

The Rev. — GREGORY said he understood that the association must be in connection with the Congregational Union.

The CHAIRMAN.—Oh no; it is simply a recommendation to form associations, having no reference to the Congregational Union.

The Rev. J. EDWARDS, of Brighton, observed that a minister of good character would always be able to obtain a letter of recommendation from the association without belonging to it.

The Rev. THOMAS HAYNES, of Bristol, thought that no good brother would ever suffer, if this were the standing rule. He believed that more vagabonds obtruded into their body than was commonly imagined—men who were more defective in their character and practice than in faith. Every precaution should be taken to exclude those who were unworthy of confidence, and every facility given for the reception of those of an opposite character. He was sure that their brother, who had been afraid of the practical effect of the rule, would have no difficulty in obtaining testimonials, if about to remove to another part of the country.

The Rev. J. BURDER, of Stroud, observed, that the good might easily obtain testimonials from their neighbours, and the bad could not. This was exactly the sort of punishment which, as Independents, they could inflict on a bad man. That negation of association would have a most beneficial operation. Hitherto, however, there had been too little caution observed in reference to the settling of pastors. He (Mr. Burder) had sometimes been amazed to see churches receive a person from a distance of three hundred miles, without making the least enquiry as to his character.

The Rev. R. ELLIOTT stated, in explanation, that he approved of the suggestion *in toto* as it stood, leaving it, that is, to the associations, to say whether they would recommend or not.

The Rev. A. WELLS observed, that those brethren whose consciences would not allow them to join an association, excluded themselves from whatever benefit such associations afforded. It might be a matter of regret that they did not join, but this was a matter in which themselves were chiefly concerned. To those brethren who entered them, the associations gave their countenance and authentication; those who did not enter them had not the same benefit. "We say nothing," said the Rev. gentleman, "to those that are without, but those that are within we do authenticate."

The Rev. R. ELLIOTT begged to inquire if it was intended that the importance of associations joining with the Union should come before the meeting now, or at any subsequent period? It was to him a matter of great importance, that all the associations should join the Union. There were many persons present, how-

ever, who were anxious for all the information that could be obtained, that they might state distinctly to their several associations what were the advantages of a connexion with the Congregational Union. He was sure they would all be very happy to hear from Mr. Wells a short statement of the benefits to be derived from that connexion.

Several other gentlemen having joined in this request,

The Rev. ALGERNON WELLS rose, and said : Nothing, my brethren, could have been more remote from my expectation, than to be called upon to expound the nature or advantages of the Congregational Union. I was here quite for another department of labour, to do my part, as well as I was able, to carry the important business which is before the meeting through its orderly progress to a result which, I hope, will be very satisfactory. My own conception of the advantage of the Congregational Union consists, primarily, in the notion of getting together an immense number of minds, that should all recognize, by the act of uniting with one another, that they are in community ; that they have opinions wherein they differ from the rest of mankind, but agree among themselves ; and that they, getting this notion of a distinct community of their own, should thereupon think that their Union will help them exceedingly in working out, throughout the whole extent of their reach, the great principles about which they are agreed. This principle is accordant with the whole structure of human society which groups men together, first of all, in the least community of families, and then takes a great number of families and makes a nation of them, not at all destroying the existence of the family by connecting all the families into one national community. I conceive, therefore, that there are a great number of churches which are all as several and distinctive as any household, but that they may all realize that one community without ceasing to be separate households ; that when you get that idea, that sentiment, you have great power in the sentiment itself ; that it is quite impossible to work great sentiments and great objects upon any other ground than great union ; and that as numbers are an essential element of sublimity, and a great element of power, and as the sublimest notion that we can form of the redeemed church consists in that incalculable representation of numbers, myriads upon myriads, all of one heart, and all singing one theme, so here, in this world, that class of men who stand alone, or who live only in little fellowships, never will and never can be powerful ; that the thing is in itself an impossibility ; that those persons who never think of themselves as connected with any other Christians, those who worship within the four walls of their ordinary sacred resort, will, from having got that idea in their minds, make themselves feeble, if there were no other way of doing it. And I conceive, therefore, that this aggregation of numbers of persons together, makes each individual a great deal more powerful than he was when he stood alone. He brings his contribution of strength to the general community, and he takes back again a portion of the strength of every one else ; and he no longer is an individual, in respect of the power that backs him, while he is an individual in respect of the liberty of his particular actions. You get all the power of a fluid, in which every separate particle moves with every other particle without the least impediment, and yet the aggregation of particles becomes an ocean that roars. Here we come together from various parts of the kingdom. I go back again to my particular abode, knowing myself connected with all of you, and that what I am doing in my little charge at Clapton, two thousand brethren are doing in their respective churches elsewhere ; and that for the truths which I witness wherever there is a necessity for it, my solitary voice will be backed by that of two thousand associated brethren, whose faces I have seen, whose pulses I have felt, and who have said to me, "Go, and we will sustain you." Well now, if you have got not an inch beyond that single circumstance, that your aggregation gives you an extent, and power, and association, you have got a power that our churches for a very long time wanted. Now then, we get this without the addition of any binding force ; we are not water frozen into ice and chained, but we are water with its fluidity, free, yet powerful. I see other bodies coming together and clamouring for

power. I read, with an interest that was as deep as it was painful, the discussions that have ensued in the separation of the British and Canadian Conferences of the Wesleyan body. There will be no separation between the Congregational Union of England and Wales and their brethren in Canada; but there is continual communion with us, and amidst those wilds, be assured, they work with heart and mind as they never would have done; and they never would have been there to work at all, if it had not been for such communion. Well, then comes the next notion, that of counsel. After you have got the notion of power, here are come together to counsel one another, to see whether, in our sentiments and opinions, we be like-minded or not. And we trim too: but then, brethren, it is trimming in love, and not in unfaithfulness. You tell me, that if I put out that my sentiments are more scriptural than the Bible Society, I shall give offence. I believe it; but I will not say it. I have got the counsel of a wise mind, which prevents me from doing a thing that is inexpedient, though I might be able to prove it in a contest. How important it is that we should be able to come together, and take counsel together, at such times as these, when every man's hand is against us—and against us, I will say, for no evil that we have done, but for our ministry of truth. We cannot but condemn institutions that are of the world. We did not put the institutions there. We go out to do our Master's work, and we have not gone far before we find a great impediment, and we simply bear our testimony about that matter. Well, now sometimes we are assailed thus. I go into counties in which the associations are depressed. I see the education, the rank, and the political power of all that possess any thing which gives them superiority over others, in array against us, and working by various charms to draw away the intelligent and wealthy people from amongst us, until I am chilled, and almost waver in my attachment to these great principles. How am I to get warmed again, but by seeing that there is a very large number of men of God who are faithful to these principles? Oh, my brethren, I am sure there must be a mistake among us, if it is necessary to prove that it is a good thing for a vast number of brethren to unite together who hold the same sentiments. We must have fallen into misconception about the whole structure of the human mind, and of human society, and about the church of the living God. At least, I think so. Well, then, we are in a practical age, and then comes the question—"Oh, this is very fine, to get together Congregational brethren of the same faith and order; but what is the practice of the thing?" Well, now we are coming to the practice: it was impossible to get to the practice before the Union was formed. Well, then, we had to build up the Union. I hope it is safe now. What have we done? My brother told you, last night, several things that we have done. We meet in London, and we get together three or four hundred pastors, and the question is, "What are you doing?" The question would never have been asked, if we had not got together. Well, then, they said, "Home missions—that is the thing you must undertake: you must get a home mission." And an anxious thing it was to get a home mission without trespassing in the doing of it upon brethren already in the work. You know the history of all that anxiety, and all that discussion by which we arrived at last at a union, which was cemented with honesty and love, and which works in peace and harmony. This is what we are doing. We are coming together, that our churches may be moved and strengthened to do this work. But now, as to a particular association, I am asked, what better an association will be which is united with us, than another that is not? Now, my charity is so large, that I would deal with those who are not united with us, and give them as much benefit as I could. But here is the thing. We want to come to wealthy places, and gather up money, in Lancashire, and Yorkshire, and Somersetshire, and to go to Nottingham and the poor districts, and say, "We are getting money from wealthy places, and we will give it to you." Why, brethren, the exhalations that arise from the earth form clouds leagues away; and we want to do the same thing, bringing the strong to assist the weak. Now you will never do that without a central organization, without something to enable you to judge where to receive, and where to give. And you

want, therefore, such a Union as this, having as little responsibility and as little power as possible; to say the truth, we have more already than sits easy, either upon our hands or upon our consciences. Well, then, this is what we meditate to do, to gather and disperse; gather first, and disperse afterwards, bringing the strong to help the weak. I had the honour of going down to attend the meeting of the Lancashire Union. I made an appeal to them, with the plainness that I ventured to use. I said, "You are spending £2000 a-year for home missionary operations within the county of Lancaster; you have sent more than five thousand pounds to assist in sending the gospel to the heathen. Let me tell you, that there are hundreds, and thousands, and millions of souls in counties in England, where your own denomination is poor, and if you can raise two thousand pounds for Lancashire, and five for the world, you can do something for them also." Well, the principle so far commended itself to their understandings that, as my friend, Mr. Slate, knows, a motion was given notice of, which I prepared at the instant, that the Lancashire Association should give a division of its proceeds to the Congregational Union of England and Wales. Now, the only thing I disapprove of is, that Lancashire should want all that £2000, and that they should make for us a separate collection. But still it shows that our brethren there are making progress. We shall have presently to discuss the education of ministers. I feel that subject to be of the last importance. If we get men we shall have money. We have nothing to do but to pray to God to send out labourers into the harvest.

A conversation then took place upon the subject of *statistics*, more particularly with reference to the census to be taken in January, 1841. Mr. Wells stated that in that census it was intended to include religious statistics, and pressed upon the meeting the great importance of making accurate returns. There was to be a return of the places of worship and the number of attendants, and the Committee were requested to give publicity to this circumstance.

The discussion on this document having closed,

RICHARD ASH, Esq., of Bristol, in moving its adoption, rose and said, I shall merely observe, that I highly approve of the object for which we are assembled, and consider my native city greatly honoured by this provincial meeting being held within it. Though I am fully persuaded that the first Christians were independent of each other, and that the words bishop, pastor, and presbyter designate the same office; yet I see no reason why those who embrace the same sentiments as to doctrine and practice should not unite for the purpose of more effectually promoting the spread of the gospel, free from what they consider to be human additions and imperfections. I would now move—

"That the document on associations be adopted by this meeting, and printed as part of the minutes of its proceedings, subject to such revision as the discussion has indicated that in the view of the meeting it requires, which revision is accordingly entrusted to the care of the Committee."

The Rev. J. SIBREE, of Coventry, briefly seconded the resolution, which was unanimously adopted.

The doxology was then sung, and the Chairman having closed the sitting with prayer, the meeting adjourned till Thursday, nine o'clock, A. M.

The ministers and gentlemen dined together at the Montagne Hotel, and the social intercourse was highly agreeable.

In the evening a vast congregation assembled in the Tabernacle, every part of that spacious building being crowded to overflowing. The Rev. Dr. Redford, of Worcester, opened the service by reading the Scriptures and prayer. The Rev. William Jay, of Bath, preached a deeply interesting sermon from Luke xix. 40. "*If these hold their peace the stones would immediately cry out.*" The venerable preacher observed, that the text is susceptible of three imports. I. That silence would be vile. II. That it would be difficult. III. That it would be useless.

We regret that we cannot find room for a complete analysis of this valuable

discourse, but a passage of its impressive close will, we are sure, interest every reader.

"While I have a full conviction—and I should not discharge my conscience this evening, unless I mentioned it—a full conviction that much has been done, yet I am aware that there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed; and that the harvest truly is great, and the labourers are yet few. And though I do not, and cannot think with some, that Britain is in such a state as should alarm, it is in such a state as should arouse us. And while there is every thing to excite, there is every thing also to encourage. I have always loved the cause which has drawn so many together yesterday and to-day; I have always rather peculiarly pleaded for home exertions; not to the exclusion of foreign, but, I should rather say, in aid of them. The Saviour, when he sent forth his disciples, said, 'Preach repentance and remission of sins in my name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' If we had to cut through a large forest, I suppose we should begin at the near side, so that our progress would also prepare our way. It is easy to see how home efforts even aid the foreign service. Every society that is formed by means of them will become a little magazine of means; every sinner that is converted by the Gospel will become an intercessor; and as to ministers, they will become advocates. Dr. Davis was the offspring of barn-preaching; and so was Toplady. It would not be delicate in the preacher to observe of himself; otherwise he might observe, that if in any measure he has been useful for more than half a century, from the pulpit or the press, he was the produce of humble village preaching."

The Rev. J. BLACKBURN, of London, closed the delightful service with prayer.

* * The Editor regrets to defer the report of the second day's proceedings till his next Number, but he could not withhold from his readers the interesting intelligence which occupies the following pages.

BIENNIAL MEETING OF THE DORSETSHIRE ASSOCIATION.

The autumnal meeting of the Associated Congregational Churches was held at Swanage on the 15th and 16th September. The Rev. T. Durant preached on Tuesday evening. On Wednesday morning, at seven o'clock, a prayer-meeting was held at the Congregational Chapel. At half past ten the Rev. Mr. Guenett preached on the given subject, "Tradition;" the Rev. J. Bristow, of Exeter, presided at the Lord's Supper; the brethren and friends dined at the Royal Victoria Hotel, where the business was transacted, and we have never before been gratified by seeing at this place so large an assembly on a similar occasion. In the evening, at seven o'clock, the Rev. R. Keynes preached. The weather was unfavourable, but the attendance was very great. The collection amounted to £15. 8s.

The following resolutions were adopted at the business meeting:

Moved by Rev. R. Keynes, seconded by Rev. A. M. Brown, and supported by Malachi Fisher, Esq.

"That the meeting rejoices in the affiliation of the Home Missionary, Irish Evangelical, and the Colonial Missionary Society with the Congregational Union, and earnestly recommends these societies to the prayers and pecuniary aid of our Associated Churches."

Moved by the Rev. Mr. Bodwell, A.M., seconded by John Brown, Esq.

"That the Associated Churches be requested to forward to the Minute Secretary, previous to the spring meeting, the number of church members, the number received within the last twelve months, and the number who have died, who have been dismissed to other churches, or who have been separated from church-fellowship."

The spring meeting of the Association will be holden at Blandford; subject proposed—Lay Agency; the preacher, the Rev. A. Morton Brown, A.M.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION-STONE OF LANCASHIRE INDEPENDENT COLLEGE.

The interesting ceremony of laying the foundation-stone of the splendid building now in progress of erection at Withington, near Manchester, as a college for the reception of students preparing for the ministry among our churches in Lancashire, took place on Wednesday, September 23d. The inadequacy of the present academy at Blackburn, important and highly useful as it has proved, compared with the wants of our denomination in Lancashire, has long been felt, and we have already published accounts of the measures which have been taken to obtain a new and enlarged institution.

The preparations for building having been made, and the foundations already raised above the surface of the ground, the ceremony of laying the chief stone was assigned to George Hadfield, Esq., Treasurer of the College, assisted by the Rev. Thomas Raffles, D. D., LL. D., Chairman of the Committee, and other ministers. The commencement of the service was fixed for eleven o'clock in the morning.

The weather, up to near the appointed hour, though not promising, was fair, and for some time previously great numbers of people, both in carriages and on foot, resorted to the spot. By a quarter to eleven o'clock, several thousand persons had assembled, when a change took place in the weather, and a fall of rain began. Under these circumstances a large temporary platform, covered with canvass, was resigned to the ladies, as the only means of sheltering them. The gentlemen who had assembled took up a position on the planks laid across the foundations around the intended corner-stone, which was slung ready for lowering to its final destination. In this state of things Dr. Clunie and the Rev. J. Gwyther ascended a small desk fixed at a few yards distance from the platform, and gave out a hymn.

At this moment the scene was one of deep interest. The assemblage had become very large, and on the platform were upwards of one hundred ladies, including many of the young and beautiful, elegantly attired, whose countenances beamed with an animation which even the unpropitious state of the weather could not abate; when an event occurred which put a temporary stop to the proceedings, and threw a gloom over the occasion which will not easily be erased from the memories of those who witnessed it. The assemblage had nearly concluded singing when the platform gave way with a loud crash, and the whole of its fair occupants were precipitated in a moment to the ground. It would be vain to attempt a description of the scene which followed. The calamity was so instantaneous and unexpected, that for a moment the bystanders seemed panic-stricken. In a moment more one universal rush seemed to be made towards the ruins of the fallen building, which resounded with the shrieks of its alarmed occupants, for the purpose of rendering assistance, and if possible rescuing them from their dreadful situation. But the work of rescue was one of delicacy and danger: every plank that was trod upon might rest upon some limb, or endanger the lives of those whom it was desirable to preserve from further harm. Many of the relatives and friends of the suffering ladies were necessarily kept long in suspense, owing to the difficulty of ascertaining amongst such a large assembly, who had and who had not escaped. At length, however, it was ascertained that no lives were lost; but the frightful bruises which some of the ladies had sustained, repressed the feelings of exultation which that fact might otherwise have excited. Miss Ann Hadfield, a daughter of the Treasurer, Mrs. E. Armitage and her daughter, with several other ladies, were severely injured. During the whole time that the ladies were being rescued from their perilous situation the rain fell in torrents, and the only place of shelter at hand being a long low shed, under which the stonemasons follow their employment during inclement weather, beneath which the unfortunates were placed till carriages could be

procured to convey them home. A considerable loss of time was occasioned, and thus it was long before the ceremony for which the meeting had been called could again proceed.

At length Dr. Clunie came forward and said, that it was their intention to proceed, but under the distressing circumstances which had occurred they would not detain the company long, but merely to lay the stone with as little ceremony as possible, and then adjourn to Rusholme Road Chapel, there to return thanks to the Almighty for the merciful preservation of so many lives which had just been placed in jeopardy. He would read the list of memorials about to be deposited in the stone, (these articles were enclosed in a large tin-case, to receive which a cavity of sufficient depth had been previously cut in the stone,) and first among them was a copy of the Holy Bible, as the basis of all our hopes and standard of our faith; next the history of the Lancashire County Union, and the Blackburn Academy; reports of the Blackburn Academy from 1818 to 1840; papers relative to this New College, including letter from the tutors and Treasurer; address of the ministers; list of subscribers; instructions to architect, and plan; lithograph of the college; report of the Missionary Society, 1840; report of the Religious Tract Society, 1840; report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, 1840; report of the Manchester Bible Society, 1840; report of the Manchester Town Mission, 1840; report of the Lancashire County Union, 1840; report of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1840; report of the Colonial Missionary Society, 1840; original copy of the hymn composed for this occasion, with a printed copy of the same; some silver coins of the sovereigns of the House of Hanover; and a list of the above articles signed by the Secretary.—The cavity in which these are to be inclosed will be covered by a tablet, bearing an inscription, the copy of which he would also read:—

“Of Thine own have we given Thee.”—1 Chron. xxix. 14.

“This FOUNDATION-STONE of the LANCASHIRE INDEPENDENT COLLEGE, erected by the voluntary contributions of the churches, for the liberal Education of pious and talented Young Men devoted to the Christian Ministry among Protestant Dissenters, was solemnly laid by GEORGE HADFIELD, Esquire, its munificent Treasurer, assisted by the Rev. THOMAS RAFFLES, D.D., LL.D., the Chairman of the Committee, and other Ministers, after fervent supplications for the divine blessing, in the presence of the Committee and a numerous assemblage of friends, on the twenty-third day of September, A.D. MDCCCXL., and the fourth of the reign of VICTORIA, Queen of the United Kingdom, &c.

JOHN CLUNIE, LL.D., Secretary.

JOHN GOULD IRWIN, Architect.

GEORGE HOGG,

CHARLES BEDFORD,

FRANCIS FARQUHARSON,

} Builders.”

“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.”—Ps. cxxvii. 1.

He should conceive it highly improper to offer any further observations on this occasion under the circumstances; he would merely add, that he held in his hand the silver trowel with which Mr. Hadfield was about to lay the foundation stone; it was presented to the Treasurer by the architect of this building, whose modesty would not allow him to offer it on this public occasion personally, and hence the duty had devolved upon him as Secretary. It bore the following inscription:—

“This Trowel,
The gift of JOHN GOULD IRWIN, Esq.
The Architect,

Was presented to GEORGE HADFIELD, Esq.

The Treasurer

Of the Lancashire Independent College,

On the occasion of his laying the first stone

Of that noble edifice,

By the Rev. JOHN CLUNIE, LL.D. the Secretary."

It was well known that the impulse which led to this undertaking was mainly, if not entirely, owing to the encouragement and support given to it by their respected Treasurer, who was now about to lay the foundation-stone. The first suggestion, he believed, fell from Dr. Payne, but the time had not then arrived for such a building to be undertaken, and it was due to their honoured friend, Mr. Hadfield, to say, that as he was the principal individual in following out the suggestion, and giving an impulse to the feeling by which the means had been raised, that duty had most justly devolved upon him which he was now about to perform. Dr. Clunie then presented the trowel.

Mr. Hadfield came forward to perform the task assigned him amidst great applause; but his spirits had evidently suffered from the calamity which had just visited the members of his family. He said, in the agitation of a moment like this, his mind naturally reverted to the painful scene which they had all just been compelled to witness. Their first duty was to render to that Being, whose superintending providence had kept them from more serious results, their grateful thanksgivings. Through the mercy and goodness of God, no lives had been lost, and he hoped would not; and he trusted that every circumstance which might make against the interests and prosperity of the institution they were about to rear might be overruled by the same superintending Providence, which had just left them cause for so much unaffected gratitude. It was a remarkable fact, and one which could not fail to make an impression upon every mind, that it was during the time Dr. Raffles was presiding over the deliberations of a meeting of this Committee, that the calamitous tidings were announced to him, that the beautiful edifice, in which he had so long and faithfully laboured as a servant under the Great Shepherd of the sheep, had been prostrated, but a few hours before, by fire. He was at that moment strictly engaged in the path of duty, and the Committee all felt it as a calamity that he should be summoned from such a meeting to witness such a heart-rending scene as that to which he was suddenly called. And yet through that same overruling hand, whose mercy in the midst of danger they had just witnessed, that very calamity had been, and he trusted would continue to be, overruled to the extension of his usefulness; and his life he trusted would be long spared to labour, and labour, if possible, more efficiently than ever he had done, in the splendid building now erecting for him to minister in, in the town of Liverpool. And see how mysteriously the hand of providence had worked in the scene which they had just witnessed! On an occasion like this, when they were met to celebrate the triumph of principle, and found an institution in which were to be reared up and trained, it was hoped, numerous and faithful ministers of Christ for generations to come, it was felt, he had no doubt by all, that the rain which had fallen prevented the full enjoyment of such a scene, was a calamity of the first magnitude; yet see how it had just been turned into one of the greatest blessings, for if the morning had been fine, how much more crowded might not that building have been, and how much more serious must have been the result to those upon it. Perhaps the very weather, which they had regarded as a most untoward circumstance of the morning, had been the means of keeping away thousands who would have been present, and might have added to the calamity. He repeated that, under the circumstances in which he was placed, by the accident in which the members of his family had been involved, it was impossible he could deliver to them those sentiments which,

under other circumstances, he was prepared to have uttered, and he begged the indulgence of the meeting might be extended to him, if he now concluded by as briefly as possible performing the duties assigned to him. (Loud applause.)

The documents already mentioned having been deposited in the cavity prepared for them, and overlaid by the inscription plate, it was covered over with a sublimate, upon which a quantity of molten lead was poured, Mr. Hadfield then took the trowel, and proceeded to spread the mortar, or cement, when the stone, the chief of the corner, was lowered to its place, and adjusted with the usual ceremonies.

The Rev. R. Fletcher, of Grosvenor Street Chapel, then offered a short prayer, which concluded the service.

A large number of people subsequently assembled in Rusholme Road Chapel, where thanks were offered up to the Almighty for the extraordinary preservation of so many lives under circumstances of such imminent peril; and Dr. Clunie then invited the company to a cold collation, which had been prepared for the occasion in the large room of the Chorlton-upon-Medlock Town Hall.

The Rev. Dr. Raffles presided at the collation, Mr. Hadfield not being present at the commencement, having been naturally led, after the events of the morning, to turn his first attention to more minute inquiries after his family, Mr. Thomas Eccles, of Darwen, occupied the vice chair; and among the company were Mr. Samuel Brooks, Mr. Hilton, and Mr. Richard Eccles, of Darwen; the Rev. I. Glyde, Rev. Samuel Luke, of Chester; Rev. Mr. Williams, of Chester; Rev. William Henry Stowell, Principal of Rotherham College; Mr. Howle, of Blackburn; the Rev. I. Pridie, of Halifax; Revs. Messrs. Gilbert, Wardlaw, and Hayward, the Principals, together with the seventeen students of Blackburn Academy; the Rev. Dr. Clunie, Rev. Mr. Fletcher, Rev. Dr. Halley, Mr. Kershaw, Mr. Carlton, &c. When the cloth had been removed,

The Rev. Dr. Raffles, as Chairman, Dr. Halley, Rev. G. Wardlaw, Rev. Mr. Hayward, Dr. Clunie, and Rev. Mr. Fletcher, addressed the company in terms that we should gladly record, did the crowded state of our pages permit. While Mr. Fletcher was speaking, Mr. Hadfield returned to the meeting, and was received with bursts of sympathy and applause, and proceeded to address the meeting. The following extracts from his address are too instructive to be omitted. He proceeded to compare the colleges of America with the institutions of our own country. Look at the colleges of their own denomination, for instance, in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and they were the most numerous of any denomination. They had fourteen. But what was the amount of education carrying on in these fourteen? Why they contained only about 240 students; he had corresponded with some of the institutions for the purpose of ascertaining the fact, and he found that to be about the number, giving a return of youths fitted for the ministry of about sixty per annum! And what was the work to be done? Why about one-sixth part of the population of the whole world was under the dominion of the British crown. It was difficult rightly to conceive the vastness of the numbers—the word *million* passed over the lips so flippantly, that we hardly appreciated its meaning. Thus under the British government there were at least 150 millions. Two-thirds of this population, among whom in all our possessions we were at liberty to send the gospel, were actual idolaters, and what were 240 students to do amongst such a population? Now he would submit it to their consideration, whether some improvement in their system of education could not be adopted. He thought it might. The number of tutors spread over the different colleges was at least 30, being a tutor to every eight students. The question was, whether some system could not be adopted of rendering the services of these tutors more available. He was desirous that the attention of the churches should be properly

directed to this inquiry. He really could not help feeling oppressed, when he considered how inadequate their institutions here were to maintain their position, with the increasing claims now making upon them. Suppose God were to answer their prayers by opening to their missions the heathen world, for which they had so long asked, were they prepared to meet the demand? Decidedly not. (Hear hear.) With reference to the present institution Mr. Hadfield proceeded to say that the sum still required for its completion, over and above the £15,000 already raised, would be £10,000, making in all as the total expense of the erection £25,000; and he would now throw out this challenge to the company, that upon all which should be subscribed towards making up that deficiency, he would give £10 per cent. (Cheers.) He felt that this was the greatest work they had ever engaged in, in this part of the country; the question was not one of religion alone, but the gracious gospel carried with it, inscribed upon its banners, civil liberty all over the world; it had shown its power wherever slavery had crossed its path, and despotism had withered under its mighty influence. (Applause.)

Mr. Brooks, the Treasurer, announced his intention to give an additional £500 towards the deficiency.

A short time previously to the company leaving the room, the Chairman said, that as an excellent lady had employed her poetic talents, which were of no mean order, in the composition of some verses which he held in his hand, and which would have been sung during the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone, had not the assemblage there been so unexpectedly dispersed—he would take an opportunity of reading them. The following is a copy—

Not for the things of time alone,
Not for the knowledge earth can give
We raise this building,—but for truths
That through eternity shall live.

Its stones may crumble into dust;
Its place by stranger feet be trod;
But the high themes within it taught,
Shall be immortal, like their God.

Author of mind, and Source of truth,
Inspire the minds thyself hast given,
With noble, pure, and holy thoughts,
Such as ally the heart to heaven.

Here condescend to dwell, and make
This building thy peculiar shrine;
And then, while endless ages last,
Be all the praise and glory thine!

NEW BRITISH AND AMERICAN CHAPEL, CITY OF ST. PETERSBURGH.

This chapel has been erected by the church formerly under the pastoral care of the Rev. Richard Knill, and latterly under that of the Rev. John C. Brown, a church composed of a small but united and devoted band of brethren, connected with various denominations of professing Christians in this country, uniting them on the broad basis of Christianity, but managing their internal polity on the principles of Congregationalism. They had hitherto assembled for worship in a chapel belonging to the Moravian brethren, but resolved, upwards of seven years ago, to erect a house for the worship of God as soon as the necessary funds should be collected. They contributed liberally themselves, and appealed to their brethren at home; but the expense of building in the capital of Russia, the difficulty of procuring a suitable site for the erection, and other circumstances, presented

many hindrances to the accomplishment of their purpose. At length they were enabled, last summer, to lay the foundation of their intended building, and have now been permitted to consecrate to the Lord the house which they have erected for his service and worship, with several convenient appendages, including comfortable apartments for the residence of him who may minister in holy things.

The services of that day on which it was first opened for worship, will long be remembered with interest by those who were privileged to worship within its walls on that occasion. On Saturday, the 5th of September, the church and congregation assembled in the chapel at 11 o'clock, when their late pastor, Mr. Brown, in their name, implored the divine presence, and that preparation of heart which was necessary to acceptable worship. Mr. Ellerby, who now preaches to the congregation worshipping there, then gave out a hymn, and presented a general prayer. Mr. Brown then read part of the 28th and 29th chapter of 1st Chronicles, delivered an appropriate address, and in prayer implored the Most High to accept the offering of his people, which, in the uprightness of their hearts, they desired should be dedicated to his service, and be for ever a house of prayer. A hymn having been sung, Mr. Adams, an American clergyman, now labouring as chaplain at the Port of Cronstadt, read the 6th chapter of 2d Chronicles, and after an eloquent and appropriate address, implored the divine blessing on all the services, which in time coming might be presented within that sanctuary, devoted to God as a thank-offering by his people. Another hymn was sung, and previous to pronouncing the apostolic benediction, Mr. B. requested the members of the church to remain, and unite with him in the observance of the Lord's Supper, as it was probable they should never again all unite in the celebration of the same festival. The congregation also remained. It was a season of deep solemn feeling. Mr. B. had afterwards an opportunity of taking leave of his beloved flock, and his brethren of the Lutheran and Moravian churches, who had joined in the worship of the day, and in a few hours embarked on his return from that interesting and important station he has hitherto filled to his native land.

The site and building of the British and American chapel has cost nearly £5000, of which between £1500 and £1600 was contributed by the churches in Britain and America; the remainder was contributed by the church and congregation in St. Petersburg. They are neither numerous nor wealthy, neither were they actuated by any sectarian motive, but they saw the importance of their undertaking, and they trusted in God for the power to accomplish it. More than one individual, and they oftener than once have literally cast into the treasury all their living, and others have practised self-denial for years, that the saving thereby effected might be devoted to the work. They feel grateful to their brethren in England and America who have aided in the erection. The building is neat and substantial, and whatever is expensive or ornamental has been the produce of the labour of the female members of the church and congregation, and they believe that they have neither misapplied the widow's mite, nor the contribution sent to them from a distance. To God they feel grateful for having enabled them to present to him their erection free from debt or incumbrance. The expression of their feeling is, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." "Oh Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people."

NEW CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL IN THE CITY OF PARIS.

The absorbing interest excited in our churches by the success attendant upon missionary exertions amongst the heathen, accounts in some measure for the comparative apathy with which they have listened to statements respecting similar results nearer home.

An event has transpired within the last few months, attended with circumstances so propitious, and effects so remarkable, as to make the observer exclaim, "What has God wrought." It is an event unparalleled in the history of that country in which it occurred; calculated to produce unprecedented influence on its religious interests; and being peculiarly associated with the scripture principles of our denomination, requires of us special notice and encouragement.

We allude to the purchase of a freehold site, and the actual erection and opening of the first Independent Chapel in the city of Paris, in the heart of the metropolis of the great and influential empire of France.

It is generally known that our gifted and devoted brother, the Rev. Mark Wilks, many years ago gave himself to the cause of God in France, when all that vast country, with its crowded millions, presented the spectacle of a great moral waste. Many were the long years, during which little or nothing could be done but in secret, through the bigotry of the government and the jealousy of the priests.

By personal intercourse, by kindly sympathies, by silent tract distribution, and evening meetings in a private house for the exposition of the Scriptures in French, our brother succeeded, under the blessing of God, to impress the hearts of a few who received the fundamental truths of the Gospel. Still nothing could be done openly, and the Lord, as it were, made this a season of preparation for those whom he was shortly about to call into action.

The great Revolution of July, 1830, which hunted down the elder branch of the Bourbon *dynasty*, crushed to the earth again the Jesuit influence; and whilst the confusion was at its height, and the civil government yet unestablished, Mr. Wilks and other devoted friends seized the moment of freedom to open a public school, and to establish public worship. These were easily recognized and legally sanctioned in the first burst of generous liberty with which the new dynasty was ushered in.

The infant cause was first in the Rue Montblanc, in a small room, where in a few Sundays they were cramped for space, a removal was effected into the Rue Taitbont, into a coachmaker's repository on the ground floor, where equal success caused a second removal. A large room on the Boulevards, over a bazaar, was then selected; but from thence, likewise, the congregation was obliged to remove for want of room. At this juncture the Saint Simonians, who had hired for their "Socialist Assembly" a large concert hall, commonly called the Salle Taitbont, were obliged, by the summary interposition of the government in defence of the public morals, to decamp. They had taken the "Salle Taitbont," for ten years, and eight of the term remained unexpired when their preaching of blasphemy was interdicted. Burdened by an enormous rent of £400 a-year, they gladly received the offer of our friends to occupy the premises at £200 per annum, whereupon the congregation and worship were transferred to the large and commodious Salle.

Here for seven years the gospel was faithfully preached, and many were converted to the Lord, both Roman Catholics and Protestants. Such multitudes eagerly sought instruction, that many were observed, from Sabbath to Sabbath, to go away from the crowded chapel, of which even the standing room was occupied. It was then decided that the moment for a greater effort had arrived, as the people were made so willing to listen to the gospel.

After great difficulty, a site was found in the same quarter of the city, a plot of freehold ground was purchased in an adjoining street, the Rue de Provence. The congregation came forward liberally, and, being encouraged to hope for assistance from the churches of England and America, they commenced and speedily erected, at the total cost of £5500, the present substantial, elegant, and commodious chapel.

The Salle Taitbont afforded accommodation for about 600, the new chapel has 1100 sittings, and a vestry, which is capable of being opened entirely into the body of the chapel.

The building has no elevation from the street, being situated behind a large

house, which occupies the frontage. The entrance is by a large and handsome portico, with folding doors, leading to a broad and lofty corridor, of about 100 feet long, lighted by three painted glass windows on each side. Over the entrance door in the street, the words "Culte Evangelique" are fixed in gilt letters, and, in smaller characters, the old name by which the worship has been so familiarly and favourably known, "Chapelle Taitbont," are added.

The entrance passage, or corridor, leads into a vestibule, (about twenty feet square,) lighted from above, and on the right and left two staircases are seen, by which the congregation ascend to the chapel, which is on the first floor, the basement being too damp, and too confined by other premises, to admit of the chapel being placed on the ground floor. A warehouse is, therefore, formed below, the rent of which will aid the expenses of the building.

The chapel, in its interior fittings, is precisely similar to our English places of worship, with the exception of chairs being substituted for pews. This is found to take less room, and does away with what is often justly complained of in our pewing system, the distinction of seats. The services, on the Lord's day, are in French at half-past eleven, in English at three. An evening French service is about to be established.

On the 3rd of May, the new building was dedicated to God. A crowded audience gave evidence of the interest and curiosity excited in the public mind. Many pastors of the National Church, amongst others the President of the Paris Consistory, two pastors of the Oratoire Church, some of the Lutheran, and several both National Church and Dissenting Ministers, were present to participate in the joy. In the vestry, previous to the service, not less than 20 ministers were thus harmoniously united. Dr. Grand Pierre preached from Isaiah lx. 20, "The little one shall become a thousand," &c. or, as the French version has it, "Le petite famille croitra jusqu'à mille personnes." He attributed the literal exemplification of these words, which the circumstances and number of the audience presented, to three causes—"The *Unity*, the *Simplicity*, and the *Practical Tendency*" of the doctrines he and his colleagues had preached in their old chapel. His appeals were most powerful to the minds and hearts of his hearers, and in his sermon he took occasion to express to the National ministers present, how far any thing like bigotry or unholy rivalry were from the hearts of those who had erected this first Independent Chapel which the capital of France had ever possessed.

The pastor Audibez, although suffering intensely in mind and body, having on the afternoon of the previous day followed to the grave the remains of a sainted wife, uttered the dedicatory prayer, and so touching were his petitions and affecting the circumstances, that almost the whole audience were melted to tears. The pastor Lazier read the Scriptures, and the Pastor Fred. Monod, of the National Church of Paris, closed by a beautiful and affectionate prayer, breathing out the heartfelt and unreserved sympathies which he, in common with many national ministers, felt in the work and scene.

In the afternoon the Rev. Mark Wilks opened the English service, taking for his subject, Haggai ii. 4. "Be strong all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts." It must have been an occasion of peculiar joy to the heart of this venerable servant of God, who was thus permitted to see the desire of his soul gratified, and the unction and energy of his discourse proved how vigorous still are the powers of his mind, and how warm are set the affections of his heart for France.

The expenses of the site and building amount to £5500, £3500 of which have been already subscribed in France and England, leaving still a heavy debt of £2000 to be discharged. Attached to the Chapel Taitbont are Schools in which nearly one thousand Roman Catholic children are gratuitously instructed every day. The Sabbath school numbers from 300 to 400 children. The new Chapel has been regularly filled ever since the opening, and many are the instances of conversion which have occurred since its erection. From the churches of England help is requested to relieve this infant cause of its debt. Not only

have the French Christians of the Chapel Taitbont nobly subscribed towards the support of their own place of worship, but they are called upon to sustain a principal share of the support of the Bible, Tract, Missionary, and School Societies which are daily extending over the towns and villages, and especially the Protestant churches of France, the reviving influence of evangelical religion.

The affairs of the chapel are managed by a committee of twenty gentlemen, who apply all funds sent for the progress of the gospel or the establishment of schools in Paris. The operations of the Evangelical and other societies, although conducted by most of the same gentlemen, are entirely distinct from those of Paris, and altogether separate in their funds. The annual expenditure connected with Paris alone is nearly £1400.

PERSONS UNDER INSTRUCTION.

Taitbont Chapel, French Congregation	- - -	1000 adults
Do. English	- - -	120 do.
St. Maur, French	- - -	250 do.
St. Jaques, do.	- - -	50 do.
		<hr/>
		1420 adults
		<hr/>
In the St. Maur School	- - -	800 children
St. Antoine, do.	- - -	120 do.
St. Jaques, do.	- - -	36 do.
		<hr/>
		956

All the schools are crowded, and 300 or 400 applications have been refused during the past year. Had the committee funds, several large schools might be immediately opened in other destitute quarters of Paris. Oh that the Christians who are zealous of good works, would visit and see with their own eyes what God has wrought in the short space of ten years in the midst of this sensual city. May He who has all hearts in his hand, dispose some to use the opportunity which may not be long continued, of promoting the welfare of a people whose influence for good or evil on the various nations of the continent is acknowledged to be paramount.

We take this opportunity of acquainting our readers that the Rev. Mark Wilks resides at No. 15, Place Vendome, and his assistant, the Rev. Royde Birch, at No. 33, Rue Neuve de Luxembourg, and either of these ministers will be happy to receive subscriptions in aid of their work, and likewise request the favour of those friends who may visit, or have relations visiting Paris, to call upon them, when they will be happy to show them their various institutions.

NEW CHAPEL, SKIPTON, YORKSHIRE.

A new chapel was opened at Skipton, Craven, Yorkshire, for the use of the church and congregation under the pastorate of the Rev. R. Gibbs. Sermons were preached on Wednesday, 10th July, 1839, by the Rev. T. Raffles, D.D., LL.D., and the Rev. R. W. Hamilton, of Leeds; on Sabbath-day, 14th July, by the Rev. J. Pridie, of Halifax, and the Rev. W. Fawcett, of Sutton. The collections at the close of the services amounted to £514 17s. 1½d. To this must be added previous subscriptions of £170, materials and workmanship, with the gift of an organ, amounting to a further sum of £170, making a gross amount of £854 17s. 1½d., as the effect of the voluntary principle.

RE-OPENING OF HANLEY TABERNACLE, STAFFORDSHIRE, AND
ORDINATION OF THE PASTOR.

This place of worship, after having been closed during seven or eight months for extensive repairs and alterations, was re-opened on Lord's-day,

March 1, 1840. It is now greatly improved in its external appearance and interior arrangements, and will hold, including the Sunday-school galleries, between eleven and twelve hundred persons. The sermons in the morning and evening were delivered by the Rev. Dr. Fletcher, of Stepney; and that in the afternoon by his son, the Rev. Joseph Fletcher, who had been elected to the pastoral office during the preceding summer.

On the following Tuesday, March 3, Mr. Joseph Fletcher was solemnly ordained to the pastoral office in the above chapel. The Rev. Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, delivered the introductory discourse; the questions were presented by the Rev. Joseph France, A. M., of Ham; the ordination prayer, accompanied by imposition of hands, was offered by the Rev. Dr. Matheson, then of Wolverhampton; after which an address was delivered to the young pastor by his father, the Rev. Dr. Fletcher. In the evening the Rev. Dr. Halley, of Manchester, in the room of the Rev. J. A. James, who was prevented by indisposition, preached to the church and congregation. The chapel at both times was crowded to excess, and a numerous assemblage of the pastors of neighbouring churches was convened on the occasion.

The collections for the enlargement of the chapel, on the Lord's-day and in the evening of the day of the ordination, amounted to nearly £267. The expenses of the enlargement have exceeded £1300; but the congregation have made liberal arrangements for the removal of the debt, without appealing to the resources of other churches; an instance of the voluntary principle, well worthy of imitation wherever it is practicable.

ORDINATION.

On Tuesday, April 14, 1840, the Rev. H. Rees, late of Highbury College, London, was publicly recognized as the pastor of the Independent church assembling for divine worship in the populous village of Broadway, Worcestershire.

The solemn engagements of the evening were commenced with the usual devotional services, conducted by the Rev. J. Hockin (Baptist) of Evesham; the introductory discourse was delivered by the Rev. J. Dawson, of Dudley; the usual questions were proposed, and the confession of faith received by the Rev. T. Ashwell, of Broomsgrove. Prayer for the pastor (accompanied with the laying on of hands,) was offered by his father, the Rev. T. Rees, of Huntington, Herefordshire. The charge was given by the Rev. G. Redford, D.D. of Worcester, and the sermon to the people was preached by the Rev. J. A. James, of Birmingham.

The tokens of the divine approbation already vouchsafed to this union are evident in the increased spirit of hearing, and the additions to the church which have accompanied the commencement of the young minister's labours, and have rendered the enlargement of the chapel absolutely necessary. But the present place being incapable of enlargement, and in too dilapidated a state to admit of alterations, the church and congregation have resolved, under the advice of the ministers of the County Association, to build a new place of worship, to accomplish which a plot of ground has been purchased; vigorous efforts and generous contributions have already been made by them, and they are thus deserving the sanction, and will, we trust, receive the kind assistance of the christian public.

PRESENTATION OF A SILVER VASE TO THOMAS WILSON, ESQ.

Many ministers educated at Hoxton and Highbury Colleges, who dined together last May in the metropolis, (vide page 423) agreed to subscribe for the purchase of a piece of plate, to be presented to Mr. Wilson as a humble memorial of their affection and gratitude. By the labours of a Committee, of which the Rev. Messrs. James and Aveling were the secretaries, the subscription has been completed, and a beautiful vase, weighing 300 ounces, was executed. This was presented to the venerable gentleman at a meeting of the subscribers and

their friends, held at the Congregational Library, on Wednesday evening, October 21st. The Rev. Dr. Matheson presided. The Rev. Dr. Morison presented the vase on behalf of himself and brethren in a speech full of manly sense and deep emotion. The reply of our patriarchal friend was highly characteristic and interesting. Apologies were offered for the absence of Drs. Fletcher, Leifchild, and Burder, Rev. George Clayton, and others. The meeting was addressed by the Chairman, Rev. Messrs. James, Aveling, Gunn, Castleton, Townley, Hopkins, Ainslie, Blackburn, Stoughton, and Cobbin. Rev. W. S. Palmer closed the meeting with prayer.

The vase is after the model of the Warwick, with a pedestal of frosted and burnished silver, and richly entwined handles. The pedestal is quadrangular, and has ornaments in accordance with the vase. It has four panels, in the first of which is represented, in bas-relief, the front of Highbury College; in the second a group of an academical character; in the third the back of the College; and in the fourth panel the arms of Mr. Wilson.

The vase itself bears the following inscription :

To THOMAS WILSON, Esq.

Forty-six years Treasurer of Highbury College

This tribute of affectionate respect

[From more than two hundred Ministers of the Gospel

Educated in that Theological Seminary

Who deem themselves honoured in bearing their testimony to his distinguished excellencies

As an enlightened faithful and devoted servant of Christ
And especially to the invaluable aid he has rendered to that important institution

By fostering it with unwearied solicitude

And augmenting its resources by his liberality and his influence

Is presented with grateful remembrances of the past and with the hope

That the honored name of WILSON will long continue to be identified

With the prosperity of Highbury College

The advancement of civil and religious liberty

And the sacred cause of evangelical truth.

RECENT DEATH.

On the 26th of March, 1840, the Rev. WM. MERCHANT, the devoted pastor of the church of Christ at Foulmere, Cambs., where he had laboured with acceptance and success for the last seven years, was called to his heavenly reward.

This faithful servant of God had been previously settled at Old Sampford, Essex, where the divine blessing rested upon his labours in an eminent degree, having removed thence to Foulmere, in 1832; here he continued actively engaged with increasing acceptance and success till an afflictive visitation, severe, but short, removed him, in the 39th year of his age, to that world where no death is known. His end was peace. The gospel he had preached in health supported him in sickness, and cheered the hours of death. "The memory of the just is blessed."

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Favours have been received from the Rev. Drs. Clunie and J. Fletcher. Rev. Messrs. H. Madgin—J. Protheroe—J. Parsons—R. Gibbs—R. Chamberlain—F. H. Green—J. C. Brown—Thos. Binney—C. N. Davies—W. Owen—Robinson Pool—J. Campbell—J. H. Godwin—J. Helroyd—J. C. Galway—G. B. Kidd—A. Wells—Thos. Russell—J. Frost.

Also from W. Stroud, Esq. M.D. Messrs. J. Conder—T. Phipson—G. Bennet—J. Brown—A. V. Harrison.